NEW

OVER 200 PAGES OF SCI-FI LEGENDS

The 50 Greatest Sci-fi icons

INCLUDING

DARTH VADER • KIRK • BATMAN • STAN LEE • TERMINATOR • PREDATOR
ALIEN • MAD MAX • GODZILLA • SUPERMAN • THE DOCTOR AND MORE...

WELCOME

"Oh brave new world, that has such people in it," exclaimed Prospero, the sorcerer of William Shakespeare's The Tempest. Written in the dawn of reason, when the cold darkness of superstition and fear was giving way to the bright lights of science and discovery, the birth of science fiction wasn't too far behind.

In the 18th, 19th and early 20th Centuries, science fiction's scattered progenitors were isolated, pioneers at the bleeding edge of literature and thought. Then as the 20th Century matured through post-War optimism, Cold War anxiety and beyond, science fiction became sci-fi – the formal relationship had become informal, sometimes dismissive and sometimes adored. The brave new world had dawned.

Sci-fi was deeply ingrained into the fabric of popular culture, and with it came a host of incredible icons. From the thwip-thwip of the Amazing Spider-Man and the cocksure swagger of Han Solo, to the shrieking staccato of the Daleks and the hypnotic uncoiling of the Alien, the impact of these characters, creators and even creations was felt well beyond the pages of the script, and even the genre.

These are The 50 Greatest Sci-fi Icons, and to them we owe everything.

The 50 Greatest Sci-fi Icons

In association with SciFiNow

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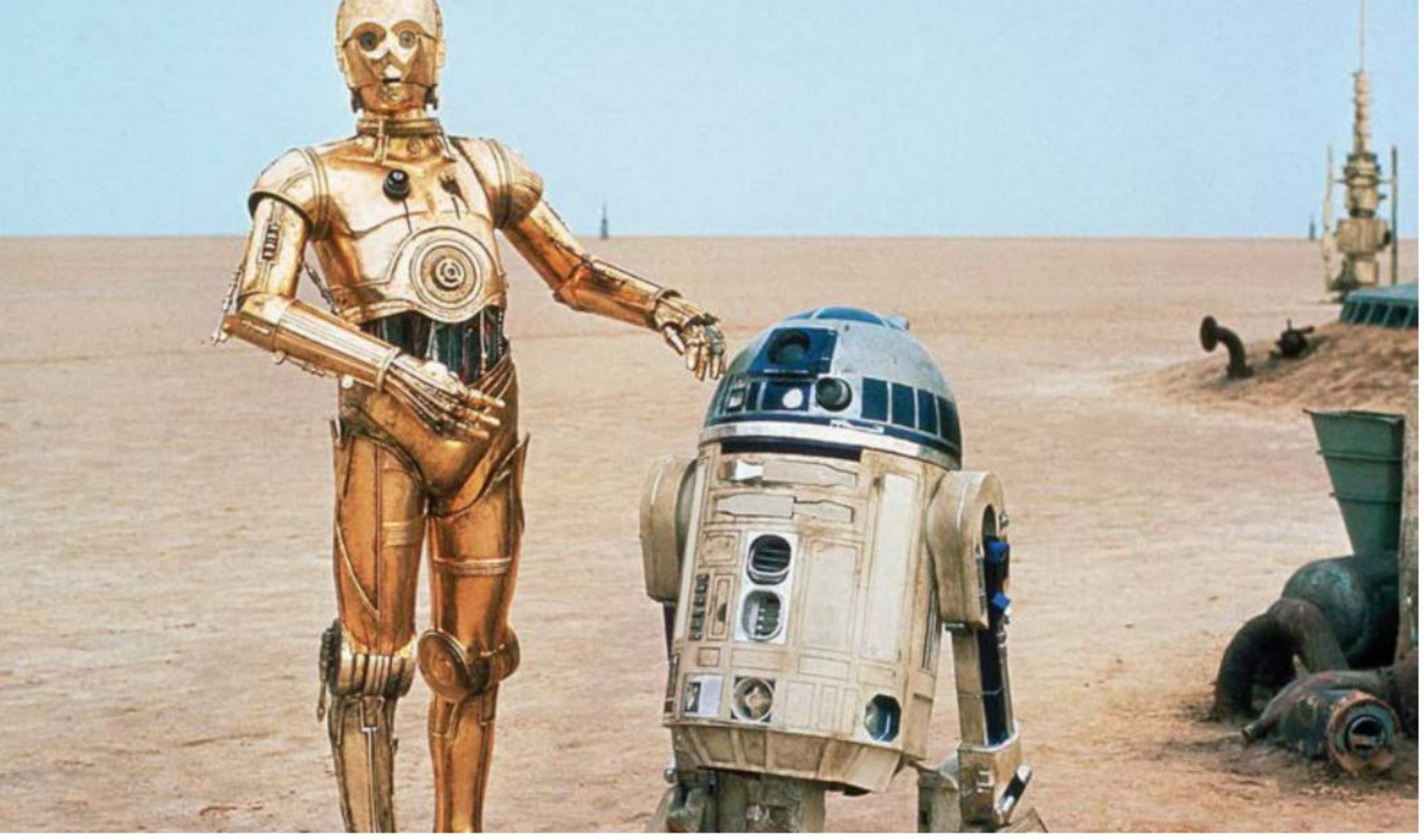

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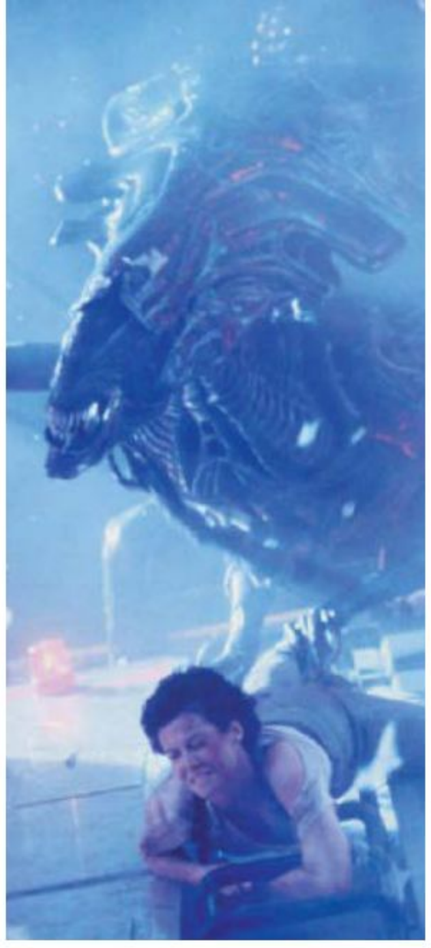

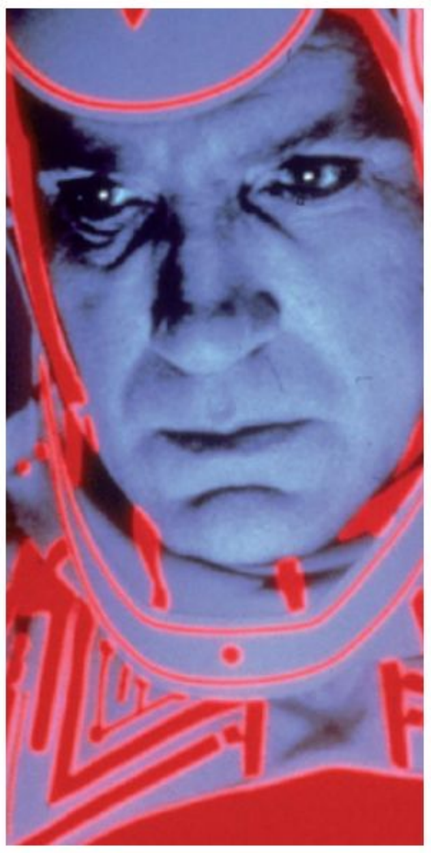
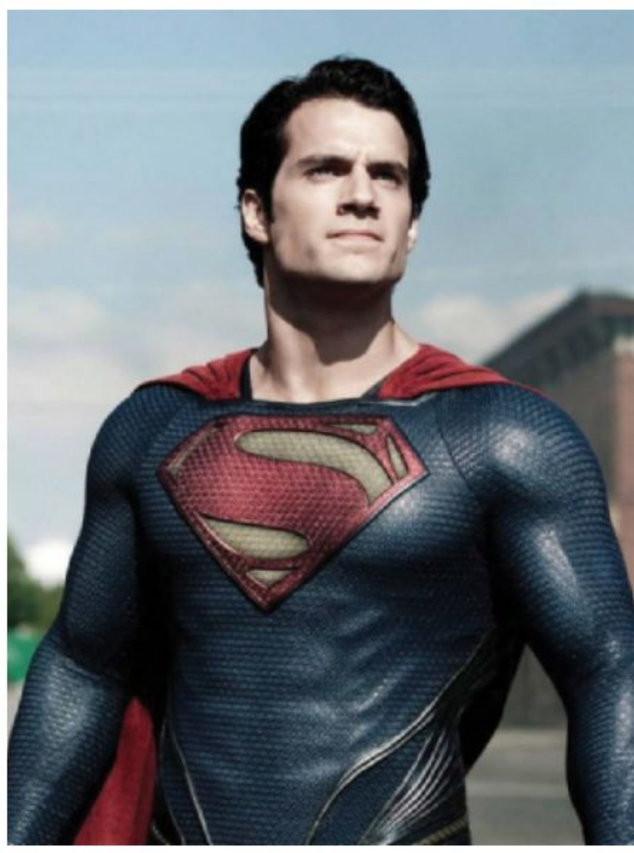

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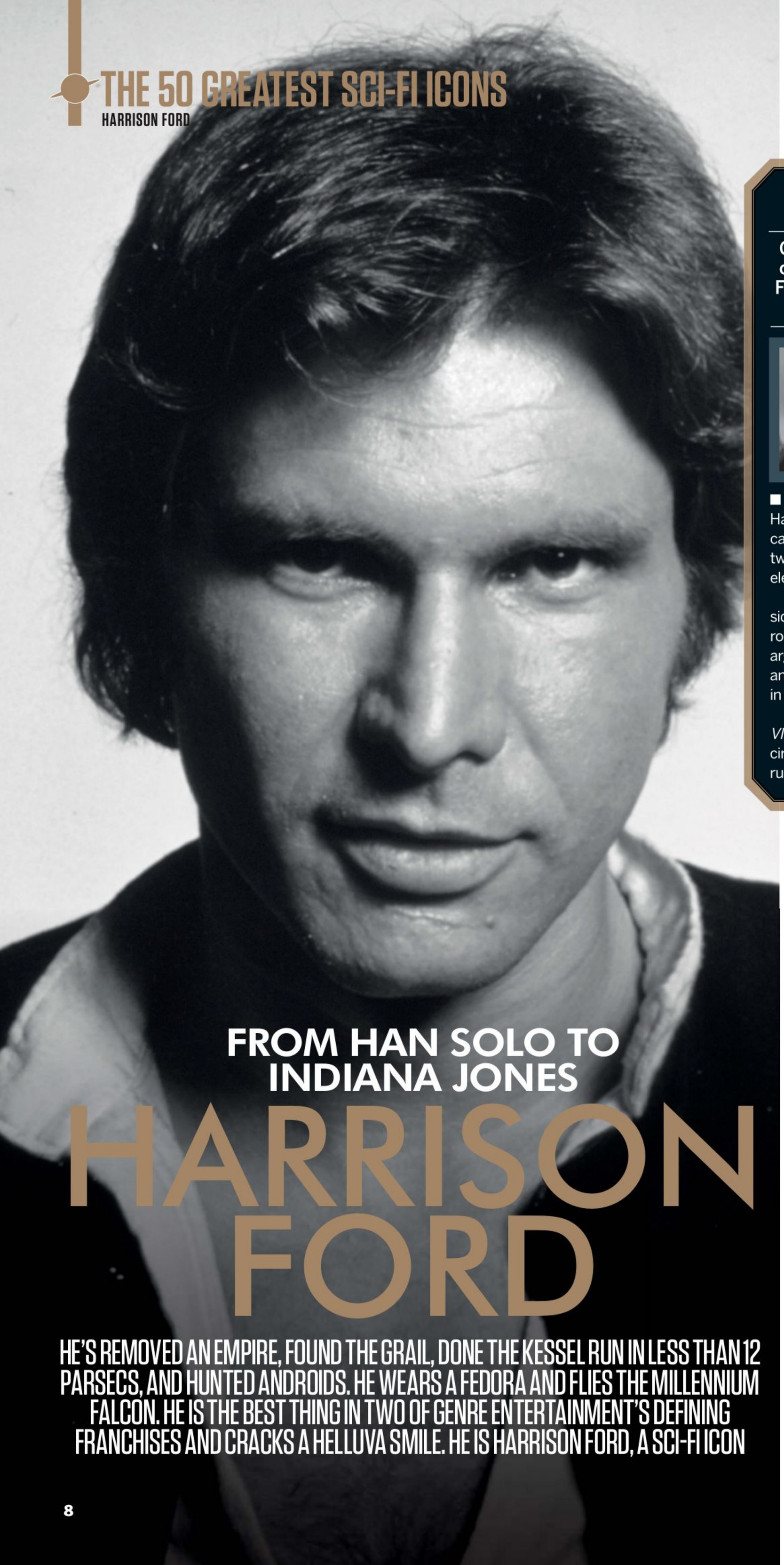
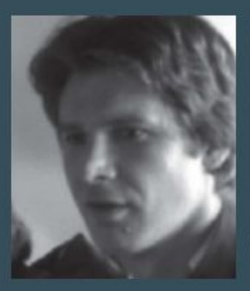


FROM HAN SOLO TO INDIANA JONES HARRISON FORD

HE'S REMOVED AN EMPIRE, FOUND THE GRAIL, DONE THE KESSEL RUN IN LESS THAN 12 PARSECS, AND HUNTED ANDROIDS. HE WEARS A FEDORA AND FLIES THE MILLENNIUM FALCON. HE IS THE BEST THING IN TWO OF GENRE ENTERTAINMENT'S DEFINING FRANCHISES AND CRACKS A HELLUVA SMILE. HE IS HARRISON FORD, A SCI-FI ICON

1 HARRISON FORD

Captain of the Millennium Falcon, Raider of the Lost Ark, Blade Runner – Harrison Ford is all these things and more. He's the quintessential sci-fi icon



SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★☆
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★☆
VERSATILITY: ★★★★☆

■ IF HARRISON FORD had only played iconic smuggler Han Solo in the *Star Wars* films, his place in the sci-fi canon would still be assured. The fact that he also plays two more of the genre's most legendary characters elevates him to near-divine status among sci-fi fans.

The *Indiana Jones* incarnation of Ford sits side by side with Han Solo as his most instantly recognisable role, but the part of Deckard in *Blade Runner* is arguably his most nuanced and complete. Regardless, any actor would be glad to have one of these characters in their oeuvre – Ford has all three.

With his return to playing Solo in *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens*, Ford looks to have come full circle, but if this is his last tilt at acting, as has been rumoured, it's fitting that he finishes where it all began.

Science fiction stole William Shatner from the rest of the world. He was, is and always shall be Captain James T Kirk. Occasionally, science fiction would loan him back, but, such were the conditions of his capture, the lease would only ever be short-term. Science fiction also stole Leonard Nimoy, Mark Hamill, George Lucas, Christopher Reeve and many, many other actors and creators who would, even despite resistance, forever remain defined by their work within the genre.

Indeed, most of science fiction's icons are just that: science fiction's. But there exists a chosen few who aren't; icons that could shrug off the association with heartbreaking ease. Harrison Ford is one such icon. The man who gave us Han, Indy and Deckard is arguably our most honoured hero but he was only ever borrowed. Harrison Ford made a mistress of the genre, and we loved him for it.

Born of a Belarusian-Jewish mother and an Irish-German father, a multifaceted destiny that would confound the hopes of the sci-fi faithful was perhaps written in the stars for Ford, a logic that extends beyond the perimeter of La La Land. Not only would the former carpenter come to be known as a dramatic actor instead of a genre one – even to some, Jack Ryan instead of Indy – he would also come to be labelled as a pilot, a democrat, General Trustee of the Governing Board Of The Archaeological Institute Of America, a board member of Conservation International, and to those in Jackson, Wyoming, a man who donated a 400-acre nature reserve. He's even had a new species of

spider *and* ant named after him. Simply, it was never in Ford's nature to be shackled by any one descriptor. But contrary to common perception this didn't hinder his importance to sci-fi and fantasy; it was the very characteristic that heightened it. For here was an actor who didn't merely give us one icon, but three.

It started with a need for new cabinets. George Lucas had called a carpenter to his offices for what you might expect but before you could say 'supporting part in *American Graffiti*' Ford, the workman in question, was reading lines for the maverick director's new film, *Star Wars*, initially to help cast actors in *Star Wars* but eventually because he had been cast himself. And so Han Solo was born. It's a testament to Ford's talent that while Lucas was clearly responsible for everything around him, it's quite obvious that Han Solo was a Harrison Ford creation.

The character is, to the franchise's detriment, everything that's synonymous with Ford and, conversely, everything that's lacking with the rest of the galaxy far, far away – Ford's "you can type this shit George but you sure can't say it" quip isn't infamous due to frankness alone. Natural charisma, believability, familiarity and depth – in essence, humanity – defined who Han Solo was and by contrast exposed the flaws of the alien, plastic environment in which he lived. Without him, *Star Wars* is a failure; with him, it's a masterpiece. Need evidence? Watch the prequels.

***Star Wars* made Harrison Ford, and Ford made *Star Wars*.**

And then there was Indiana Jones. Another character from the House of Lucas but one set in the Nazi-filled pages of Forties boys' own fiction rather than the dark recesses of the Galactic Empire, and therefore primed for a different type of audience (although ultimately one that appealed to all). Such is the strength of his oeuvre, Harrison Ford will forever be remembered as Harrison Ford, but there can be little doubt that Indiana Jones remains his most loved creation (even surviving the fallout of surviving the fallout in a fridge). The whip, the fedora, the coat, the score and so much more serve the iconography of the franchise well but, again, it's Ford alone who imbues the character with the

"WITHOUT HARRISON FORD, STAR WARS IS A FAILURE; WITH HIM, IT'S A MASTERPIECE"

Han Solo is the best character in all of *Star Wars*, bar none.

IN THE WORDS OF A SCI-FI ICON

IT'S LONG BEEN SAID THAT NO ONE THROWS A PUNCH LIKE HARRISON FORD. BUT THERE'S NO ONE THAT THROWS A PUNCH LINE QUITE LIKE HIM EITHER...

HAN SOLO

"What good is a reward if you ain't around to use it?"

"Boring conversation anyway."

"Travelling through hyperspace ain't like dusting crops, boy!"

"Either I'm going to kill her or I'm beginning to like her."

"Look, Your Worshipfulness, let's get one thing straight: I take orders from just one person – me."

"A Jedi Knight? Jeez, I'm out of it for a little while, everyone gets delusions of grandeur!"

"Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a blaster by your side."

INDY

"I don't believe in magic. A lot of superstitious hocus-pocus."

"It's not the years, honey, it's the mileage."

"You want to talk to God? Let's go see him together, I've got nothing better to do."

"I said no camels. That's five camels. Can't you count?"

"I don't know. I'm making this up as I go."

DECKARD

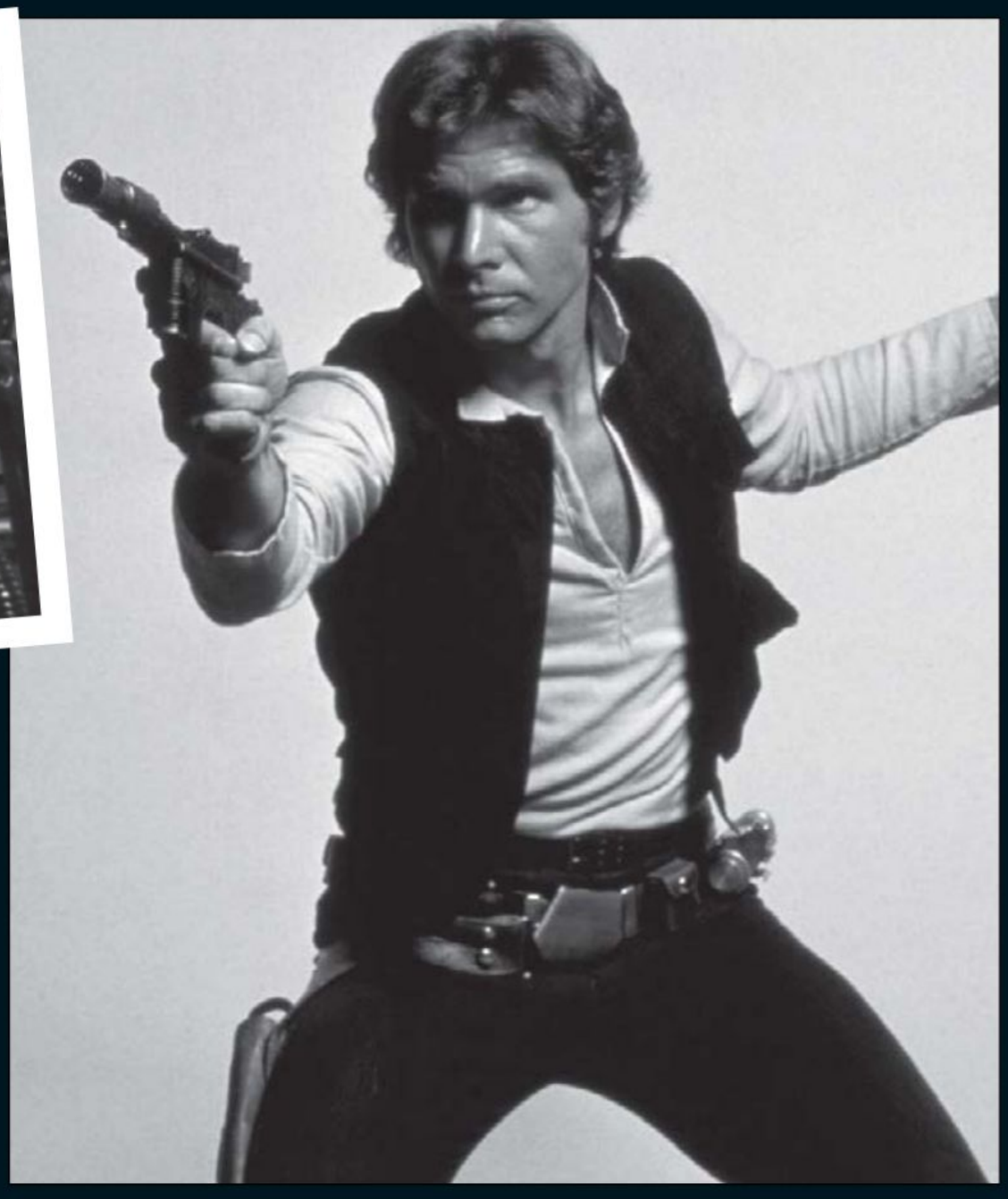
"Replicants are like any other machine – they're either a benefit or a hazard. If they're a benefit, it's not my problem."

"I have had people walk out on me before, but not when I was being so charming."

"I was quit when I come in here, Bryant, I'm twice as quit now."

"NEVER TELL ME THE ODDS"

THE (PRE-FORCE AWAKENS) HAN SOLO STORY



Clearly, Han most definitely shot first...

Pilot, smuggler, gambler, revolutionary, bounty, mercenary, husband, father, friend. Han Solo is many things to many people, be they allies or enemies. Though his Expanded Universe life may now be history, there remains one word to underpin all connotations of the man – adventure.

Born in Corellia 29 BBY, orphaned by his parents and disowned by the galaxy, it was not long before a young Solo was serving under Garris Shrike, a ruthless pirate who would provide his new mate with a scattershot education with a curriculum of begging, stealing, asteroid mining and swoop racing. But destiny had bigger plans, and eventually, in typically rough fashion, Solo closed the first chapter of his life and began anew in the dark wilderness of the galaxy, ultimately leading to the overthrowing of an empire, the shaping of its successor, battles won, battles lost, and family gained.

At the heart of the man lies a paradoxical trait – that Han is an honourable mercenary – and this is perhaps best described by his relationships. Disconnected from his own bloodline, despite it leading back to Berethron e Solo, King Of Corellia during the Golden Age Of The Republic, Solo has, in the majority, associated himself with the sort of scum and villainy most would avoid, be it Jabba the Hutt, Mako Spince, Lando Calrissian (from whom he won his ship, the Millennium Falcon, in a game of Sabacc) or the Imperial Guard, the latter being where Solo tried to fulfil his dream of becoming a pilot, only to be dishonourably discharged for saving a Wookiee from the wrath of a cruel Commander.

And yet Han married a princess and became close friends with Luke Skywalker, a Jedi Knight who founded the New Jedi Order. He saved Wookiees from slavery on Kashyyyk, was a General for the Rebel Alliance on Endor and defended Corellia from a disastrous fate at the hands of the Galactic Alliance. It's these seemingly competing sides to Solo's character – part lawless, part upright – that have made him such a compelling figure.

For a man who has shown a disregard for politics in the past, Han has nevertheless been involved in some major turning points in the evolution of the galaxy, playing a key role in the Battles of Yavin and Endor, as well as fighting to ensure the New Republic was given a strong platform for development. But there has been a cost, losing both his great friend Chewbacca and his son Anakin in the Yuuzhan Vong war. Solo had, though, proven his leadership skills long before joining the Rebel Alliance, as evidenced when the Empire sent a fleet to destroy Smuggler's Moon in 4 BBY. The Battle Of Nar Shaddaa ensued, and the lawless won, with Han again playing a pivotal role.

It's a complex life full of bounty hunters, hyperspace, illegal cargo and being frozen in carbonite, yet the real measure of Han can perhaps be found in his familial legacy. He is a devoted husband and father, his allegiance to Leia Organa more powerful than any political conviction. Indeed, the fate of his children is in fact a fitting legacy: Anakin's death symbolic of the ever-present tragedy in Han's life; Jacen, who became Sith Lord Darth Caedus, representing the lawlessness and temptation that governed large parts of his father's youth; and finally Jaina, his Jedi daughter, reflecting the over-the-odds triumph that has arguably overridden all else in Han's life.

Ford defined another archetype with adventurer Indiana Jones.

***Blade Runner* showcases Ford's ability to quietly control a film.**

necessary warmth and charm. There have been countless clones of Indy, himself a derivative creation, but it's only ever him we remember and care for, and it's because it's only him that's played by Ford.

But whereas Han and Indy were cut from the same cloth, Deckard was an enigma all his own – the sleet to their sunshine, the punk to their pop. Unlike the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* films, *Blade Runner*'s hero, if he can even be called that, is secondary to Philip K Dick's ideas and Ridley Scott's subsequent realisation; he is not the star of the film as it doesn't allow for such frivolities. This is mature, sophisticated sci-fi, and it's to Ford's eternal credit that he responds to the challenge with such astute measurement. Indeed, as Dick himself put it, "if Harrison Ford had not played that role, Deckard would never become an actual person". An altogether different creation from his previous genre efforts, Ford's Deckard acts as a sympathetic conduit for the film's complex thematic messages concerning the human condition while simultaneously harking back to the gumshoe fiction of decades gone by. It's a remarkably assured performance and one that had the curious side effect of creating a counter-culture poster boy with exactly the same bone structure as the mainstream heroes of box-office blockbusters.

And with this virtuoso display of versatility – *Blade Runner* arriving only one year after *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* – it's clear that it was Ford the actor, not the roles themselves, that had left an indelible mark on the genre. Throughout the past two decades he has remained one of the most successful actors in the world and has been so without the need to borrow once more from sci-fi or fantasy – up until *The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull*, *Ender's Game* and *The Force Awakens*, *The Last Crusade* was Ford's last notable appearance on genre screens. And yet he could not be held in higher esteem; he is the shooting star that blazed across our horizon decades ago, but whose trail never faded.

He was never science fiction's to own, but Ford's career was forged in the cockpit of the Millennium Falcon – hence why it's so fitting that he should return there once more. Subsequently he has become, perhaps even unwittingly, an honorary ambassador for the genre, a quiet champion who does more for the cause through separation than integration. And there could be no one better: he is both your dad and you rolled into one; matinee charisma with Friday night chops, he is, as only few have been, screen perfection and truly an icon unlike any other.

"HIS CAREER WAS FORGED IN THE COCKPIT OF THE MILLENNIUM FALCON – IT'S FITTING THAT HE SHOULD RETURN"

2

MILLENNIUM FALCON

Star Wars' most iconic vessel, piloted by Han Solo and Chewbacca (and occasionally Lando Calrissian and Nien Nunb) and one of the fastest ships in the galaxy

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★½
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
DESIGN: ★★★★★
OFFENSIVE POWERS: ★★★★½
SPEED OR RANGE: ★★★★★

■ THE MILLENNIUM Falcon is just cool. It's possibly the coolest spaceship ever built and a legend in the *Star Wars* universe. Piloted by smugglers Han Solo and Chewbacca, despite its rough and ready look the ship was modified to be one of the fastest vessels in the galaxy, managing to make the fabled Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs. Let's just forget that that's a unit of distance not time, Han.

According to legend Solo won the Millennium Falcon from Lando Calrissian in a game of Sabacc, which certainly explains a lot about their relationship. The Falcon was also one of the primary inspirations for the look of Mal Reynolds' ship Serenity in the show *Firefly*.

3

R2-D2 & C-3PO

The prissy golden C-3PO and pragmatic and plucky R2-D2 are the old married couple of the *Star Wars* universe, and have remained at the heart of the saga since

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
DESIGN: ★★★★★
OFFENSIVE POWERS: ★★★★★
SPEED OR RANGE: ★★★★★

■ INSPIRED BY comic relief Tahei and Matakishi from Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress*, R2-D2 and C-3PO are a perfectly mismatched pair. Highly strung fusspot Threepio was the butt of many a joke while R2-D2 was the cheeky but cool droid who always knew more than his poor blethering counterpart.

Without these two droids' escape from the Tantive IV, the Rebel Alliance would never have recovered the stolen Death Star plans leaving the Empire free to intimidate the Galaxy into submission, so they are pretty important.

Their appearances in the prequels mean that R2-D2 and C-3PO are the only characters to be played by the same actors in all six *Star Wars* films. They've appeared in adverts and video games and are instantly recognisable as de facto mascots for the franchise.

R2-D2 & C-3PO

4

PRINCESS LEIA

Princess of Alderaan, youngest member of the Imperial Senate before its dissolution and senior figure in the Rebel Alliance

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★½
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★½
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ PRINCESS LEIA was refreshingly un-princesslike when she made her debut in *Star Wars*. Despite being under arrest as a Rebel spy, witnessing the callous destruction of her home planet Alderaan and being the smallest person in the room she managed to hold her own against her Imperial oppressors.

She secures the plans to the Death Star and plays an active role in her own rescue so she's far from a traditional damsel in distress – something Han discovers during their courtship during *The Empire Strikes Back*.

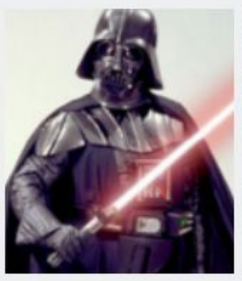
OK so the gold bikini may have been just a teeny bit of fan service but she still managed to choke an enemy while wearing it. In the Expanded Universe novels Leia becomes the leader of the New Republic, marries Han Solo and even builds her own lightsaber and masters the Force but fans will have to wait for *Episode VII* to see where her story goes next.

PRINCESS LEIA

5

DARTH VADER

The fallen hero of the Clone Wars who became the Dark Lord of the Sith known as Darth Vader, father of Luke Skywalker and Leia Organa



SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ THE COMBINATION of David Prowse's imposing 6'6" physique and James Earl Jones' distinctive voice made Darth Vader an intimidating presence and every inch an icon from his first scene in *Episode IV - A New Hope*.

At first more of an Empire enforcer, Vader captured the imaginations of the film-going public prompting Lucas to add some important back-story which would catapult the character to science fiction legend and inspire the plot of the prequel movies.

The words 'No, I am your father' are etched in the heart of every *Star Wars* fan, adding a splash of domestic drama to the epic space adventure. It shocked audiences but also offered Vader the chance to redeem himself through his son, Luke.

Ralph McQuarrie originally designed his imposing armour as a spacesuit, but this was reconned as a survival suit Vader must wear because of his wounds.

6

STORMTROOPER

The cloned soldiers of Star Wars' Galatic Empire, the Stormtroopers may not be able to shoot straight but they're a potent symbol of the Empire's rule

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ ANOTHER MASTER stoke of design from concept artist Ralph McQuarrie, the Stormtrooper is one of the most recognisable examples of cannon fodder in modern cinema.

These masked soldiers represent the kind of faceless and ever-present fascism Palapatine's Empire stands for. Their reach is Galaxy-wide but you never see them flinch or react to any of the horrors around them.

That said you have to give them points for style. The distinctive white battle armour of the Stormtrooper is a common sight at conventions across the world despite the fact that it looks in no way practical in terms of camouflaging or ease of movement.

7

BOBA FETT

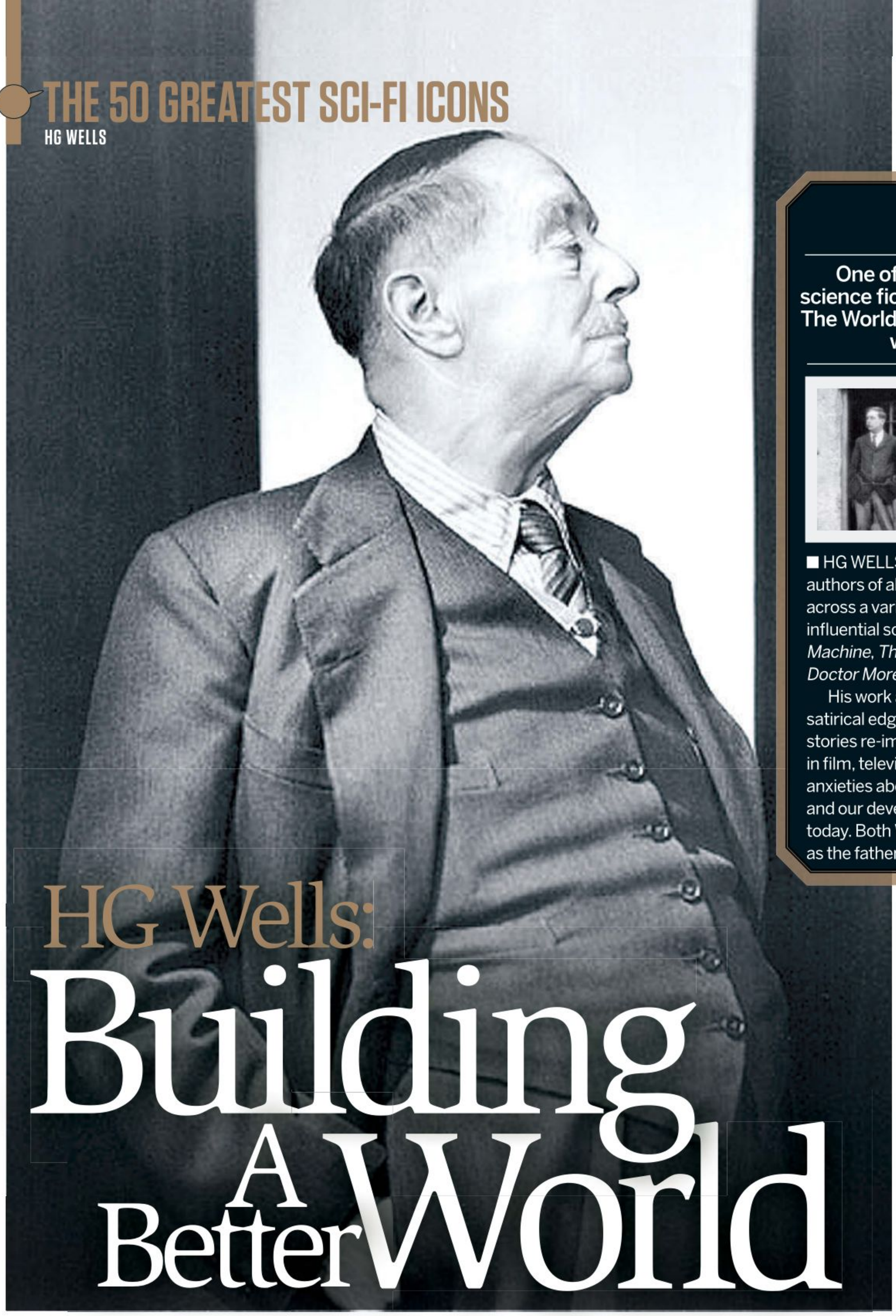
Fan favourite bounty hunter from the Star Wars universe, Boba Fett is a near mute Mandalorian of mystery who even has the stones to backchat Darth Vader

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ BOBA FETT has the dubious honour of being a main series character introduced during the infamously bad *Star Wars Holiday Special*. He overcame this handicap to become a cult favourite and the villain who had Han Solo frozen in carbonite and taken back to Jabba the Hutt.

Fett barely speaks a word but it's obvious that he means business. He talks back to Darth Vader which few people should ever attempt - even when he's just in the room, the soundtrack gets better.

The prequels revealed that he was the clone of bounty hunter Jango Fett, raised as his son. Boba witnessed his father's decapitation at the hands of Jedi Mace Windu during the Battle of Geonosis.



HG Wells: Building A Better World

THE FATHER OF SCIENCE FICTION WAS ALSO ONE OF ITS MOST NOTORIOUS FIGURES. PERMANENTLY DISSATISFIED WITH THE WORLD, HG WELLS SOUGHT TO CHANGE IT THROUGH THE POWER OF HIS VISION. HE SUCCEEDED, BUT LEFT A CONTROVERSIAL LEGACY IN HIS WAKE

The story of HG Wells cannot be explained in the context of science fiction. The story of HG Wells *is* science fiction. It says enough about the impact of his work that, despite *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man* and *The Island Of Dr Moreau* all being published before 1900, the term 'science fiction' wasn't even coined until 1920. He is one of literature's great thinkers, who changed the mindset of the world in a way that few writers have. He is widely remembered as the father of sci-fi, and the reputation is entirely justified.

The responsibility for the origins of the genre – in literature at least – is often apportioned between Wells and Jules Verne. Even in his own lifetime this was the case, though Wells had no appetite for the comparison. In his eyes, the French man was worth little regard, perpetually fascinated by hot-air balloons and submarine adventures, with little time spent on life's grand dilemmas. Wells is the archetypal science-fiction writer, marrying subtlety, wit and depth with incandescent ideas. Few writers have fit the role so perfectly.

Wells' character was defined by his relentlessly analytical nature. He was given to dwelling on the tragedies he witnessed in the world, and was a prominent figure in both politics and sociology. He produced volumes of popular science and history before the practice had even been established, and his voice went out to millions across the BBC airwaves. Like Isaac Asimov, Wells saw himself as a teacher, and was determined to use his intellect to illuminate the public on the forces that threatened to reshape their lives.

By the end of the Thirties, Wells had become vehemently critical of Hitler and the Nazi Party, and he was summarily branded a 'degenerate' by the Nazi minister for propaganda, Joseph P Goebbels. When overzealous students took to the streets to burn books under orders from the Fuhrer, Wells' novels were among those chosen for destruction. When the war finally abated, a list of names was discovered. It included all of the British writers and thinkers seen

8

HG WELLS

One of the most prolific and influential science fiction writers, author of The War Of The Worlds, The Time Machine and much of what we take for granted

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
CRITICAL ACCLAIM: ★★★★★
WRITING SKILLS: ★★★★★
PRODUCTION SKILLS: ★★★★★

■ HG WELLS IS one of the best-known science fiction authors of all time. He was an extremely prolific writer across a variety of genres but he is best known for his influential science fiction novels including *The Time Machine*, *The War Of The Worlds* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

His work acted as social commentary with a satirical edge and timeless quality that has seen these stories re-imagined and referenced countless times in film, television and radio. Wells' work captured anxieties about our future, our place in the universe and our development as a species that remain relevant today. Both Wells and Jules Verne are often described as the fathers of science fiction writing.

Unfortunately, Wells's creative legacy has been tainted with some poor adaptations of his work.

as a threat to the Nazi Party should the proposed land invasion of Great Britain be successful. These names would be sent directly to the labour camps to be liquidised. Somewhere near the top, near Winston Churchill but not quite, was the name Herbert George Wells.

It is wonderfully ironic that a career of such incredible productivity and apparent success should spring from a failed science test. Wells attended the Normal School of Science in Kensington and had ambitions for a career as a scientist. However, his restless mind had lead to some poor marks in his final year, and the abysmal result of his astronomical physics test seemed the final nail in the coffin: Herbert George Wells was not cut out for science.

The young Wells could not stifle his disappointment, but a staunch belief in his own ability lead him to pursue the subject in fiction. His natural talent soon

"One of literature's great thinkers, Wells changed the mindset of the world in a way that few have"

became obvious – his first short story was published in 1884, at the age of just 18 – but his feelings of resentment toward the Normal School raged in the pit of his stomach. In his 1895 story *The Argonauts Of The Air*, his principal characters crash a flying machine into the Royal College of Science, formerly the Normal School, causing explosions, fatalities and quite appalling levels of chaos.

Those who prefer to focus on the unsavoury elements of Wells' character – and he was certainly no saint – equate *The Argonauts Of The Air* with a form of literary terrorism. It certainly marks him out as a man to bear a grudge, but more than anything it displays a characteristic that would shape Wells' entire body of work: his straight refusal to accept life as it was presented to him. By any standards Wells was a radical, who supplemented the intense disappointment he felt in humanity's destructive nature with a boundless optimism. This drive to change the world often lead him to some dark and enigmatic opinions, but it also created the idea of science fiction as we understand it today.

"The founder of Future Studies was the English novelist, populariser and journalist par excellence, HG Wells," wrote the literary historian W Warren Wagar in 1983. "No one else begins to rival him. In Wells all the tendencies in earlier futurist thought coalesced and in his abundant writings models may be found for nearly all that is best in present-day futures enquiry."

Indeed, the impact of Wells' early work must have been enormous. The literature of the late 19th Century was bloated with veneration of history or painstaking dissection of contemporary mores. But five remarkable novels published in just six years – *The Time Machine*, *The Island Of Dr Moreau*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War Of The Worlds*, *The First Men On The Moon* – proved that Wells had the talent to explore both the past and the present through the filter of an imagined future.

Wells had been a devotee of Darwinism since his first encounter with the theory, and despised the dogma and traditions of organised religion. He intended to deflate the pious view of man being at the centre of all things, recasting mankind as just one of many intelligent species, some more evolved, some less, in books like *The Time Machine* and *The Island Of Dr Moreau*. Most of the author's ideas were grand in scale, but he occasionally used specific incidents as fuel for his creative fire. *The War Of The Worlds* makes explicit criticisms of the alleged genocide of Tasmanian aborigines, even going so far as to directly ask the reader to sympathise with the Martians.

"And before we judge them too harshly," Wells writes, "we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought. Not only upon animals, such as the vanished Bison and Dodo, but upon its own inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants in the space of 50 years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?"

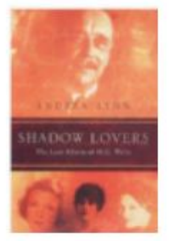
Wells became so obsessed by creating a better world that, after the startling period of sustained creativity at the turn of the century, he turned his attention away from science fiction and toward reality. Accomplished works like *Ann Veronica*, *Kipps* and *Tono-Bungay* displayed a newfound talent for subtlety and characterisation, as well as a notably liberal attitude towards women's rights.

But Wells would always return to science fiction, because it was only here that he felt he could create a true utopia. The here and now was full of destruction and wasted potential, but through fiction he could show that destruction as something positive. A fresh chance for mankind to build itself anew, using the millennia of knowledge it had accumulated to form a civilisation based on science, understanding and co-operation, stewarded by the global parliament he so desperately lobbied for in the real world. Ever the optimist, Wells frequently seemed to present Armageddon

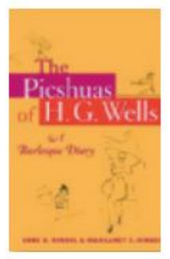
All's Wells That Ends Wells

Fresh insights into the character of the father of science fiction

The Spinster And The Prophet, by AB McKillop
Despite being one of Wells's greatest commercial successes, *The Outline Of History* was the subject of a bitter legal crusade from the feminist author Florence Deeks. She claimed that the manuscript was similar to one of her's that Wells' publisher had turned down years before. This is the full, fascinating story.

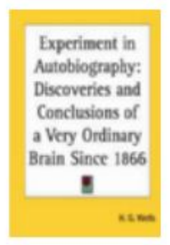


Shadow Lovers, by Andrea Lynn
In the last decade of his life, HG Wells fell in love with three different women: Baroness Budberg, and the well bred Americans Constance Coolidge and Martha Gellhorn. Andrea Lynn paints a picture of Wells as a charismatic lover, driven by his search for a wife as well as his extraordinary intelligence.



The Picshuas Of HG Wells, by Gene K Rinkel and Margaret E Rinkel
The memory of HG Wells will always live on through his writing, but he was also a keen sketch artist with a penchant for cartoons. This collection of his doodles attempts to find hidden truths about their creator's personality and his views on the world around him. This is the largest published collection of Wells' drawings.

HG The History Of Mr Wells, by Michael Foot
As the former leader of the conservative party, Michael Foot is well placed to understand the political subtext of Wells' writing. By charting the development of his ideas from an early age, and taking into account the effect that women had on his writing, Foot delivers arguably the finest account of Wells' life.



Experiment In Autobiography, by HG Wells
Like all great novelists, Wells' passion for writing did not stop with fiction, and he left behind a series of illuminating volumes, dissecting and commenting upon the events of his entire life. Wells' incredible intellect is always in evidence, and for a portrait of the man's mind there is no better point of reference.

The Spinster And The Prophet

Wells's financial success became the source of great controversy

Much like Isaac Asimov, HG Wells felt he had a duty to inform mankind about the world around them. *The Outline Of History* was his clearest attempt at communicating science to the masses, but it would see him plagued by accusations of plagiarism.

Florence Deeks was an amateur historian who had submitted a book called *The Web* to MacMillan, Wells' publisher, in 1918. Her work was returned with a refusal, but upon reading *The Outline Of History* in 1920, Deeks was struck by the book's similarities to her own.

After consulting experts who assured her that she had a case, Deeks took the matter to courts. Deeks would pursue the case until 1932, but to no avail; Victorian society just wasn't ready to accept the word of an unmarried feminist over that of a distinguished, male academic. As McKillop argues: "At the time nobody believed it could possibly be true."

In his book *The Spinster And The Prophet*, McKillop argues that the case was rightly dismissed, though the wealth of circumstantial evidence suggests that his publisher probably used Deeks' work as a template to inspire Wells into writing. The subtleties of the final manuscript, however, are directly attributable to Wells's enormous talent.

as a golden opportunity for the human race in his fiction.

As Wells revealed in his 1908 book *New Worlds For Old*: "I believe this world… will one day bear a race beyond our most exalted and temerarious dreams, a race begotten of our wills and the substance of our bodies. A race, so I have said it, who will stand upon the Earth as one stands upon a footstool, and laugh and reach out their hands amidst the stars… Painfully, laboriously, we mean to destroy false ideas of property and self, eliminate unjust laws and poisonous and hateful suggestions and prejudices, create a system of social right-dealing and a tradition of right-feeling and action."

This desperate search for a better way of life, however, was Wells' greatest shortcoming. He was a well-known philanderer who often preached about the insanity of monogamy, seemingly to justify his numerous affairs, but his disappointment with the world often lead him to adopt controversial views and seek salvation in the wrong places. "His most serious shortcoming was one that many of us share," observed W Warren Wagar, in a typically apologetic tone. "He too often let wishful-thinking overshadow his common sense. In his eagerness to invent the future… he let himself see events on the horizon that were simply not ready to happen."

It is as easy to see Wells as a huge intellectual force, crusading for the good of mankind, as it is to see him as a wide-eyed child, willing the world to become just as he's always dreamed and running into trouble as a result. Whatever your view, this fragile sense of peace that Wells had with the world would eventually get the better of him, crushing his spirit.

The trouble with Wells' optimistic nature is that it sometimes led him to invest his trust in the wrong places. He once interviewed Lenin, and proclaimed him a creative individual whose socialist vision was the only hope for the reformation of Russia. Similarly, in 1927, he became enamoured with the rise of fascism, writing, "There is good in these fascists. There is something brave and well meaning about them." Such opinions won him very few friends amongst his peers, especially when placed beside his blunt dismissal of organised religions. In 1941, George Orwell was even moved to comment that, "Much of what Wells has imagined and worked for is physically there in Nazi Germany."

> "It is ironic that a career of such apparent success should spring from a failed science test"

Judging by Wells' fondness for fabricating utopian, rationalist societies governed by the intellectual elite, it is difficult to avoid the fact that Orwell had a point. But the whole truth is much more disturbing, and is as damning of British high-society as it is of Wells's personality. Like many prominent Darwinists of the time, Wells was an advocate of Eugenics, the process of controlling reproduction of the population for the benefit of the species or society. On one level it fits snugly into the Darwinian ideal of 'Survival of the Fittest', but when taken to extremes it can provide the underlying philosophy for atrocities like

***The Time Machine* is arguably one of the most influential sci-fi stories of all time.**

Sci-fi Timeline
A SELECT HG WELLS BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE TIME MACHINE
1895
The Time Machine popularised the notion of time travel for all media and genres.

THE INVISIBLE MAN
1897
Wells has never created a more enduring character than Griffin. He stands alongside Dracula as an archetype.

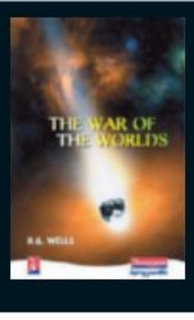
THE SLEEPER AWAKES
1899
Wells' spin on 'Rip Van Winkle' saw its character wake up 300 years in the future, and has been referenced in Woody Allen's *Sleeper*.

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON
1901
Wells' story of two brilliant scientists encountering extraterrestrial life on the moon is now seen as an allegory for imperialism.

KIPPS
1905
This story of an orphan forced into upper class society is one of HG Wells' strongest outside of science fiction.

1895 | 1890 | 1895 | 1900 | 1905

THE ISLAND OF DR MOREAU
1896
The themes in *Moreau* are thought to be a reaction to animal vivisection.



THE WAR OF THE WORLDS
1898
Wells' most known book, helped in no small part by Orson Welles' radio play and Spielberg's film.

ANTICIPATIONS
1901
Essentially a collection of essays on what the future might hold, *Anticipations* would become Wells' first bestseller and provoke interest in his earlier work.

THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND
1904
Alien cultures take centre stage when a community of blind people are discovered by an explorer.

IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET
1906
Mankind is pulled back from the brink of a war by the mind-expanding properties of a passing comet.

the Holocaust. Wells' stance on the subject is most clearly defined in *Anticipations*, a 1901 collection of scientific writings on the future of society. Despite containing a wealth of insight and information, the book would become a source of embarrassment for Wells in later life. Reading his thoughts now, it isn't difficult to see why.

"The ethical system that will dominate the world state will be shaped primarily to favour the procreation of what is fine and efficient and beautiful in humanity," he writes. "Beautiful and strong bodies, clear and powerful minds, a growing body of knowledge – and to check the procreation of base and servile types, of fear-driven and cowardly souls, of all that is mean and ugly and bestial in the souls, bodies, or habits of men. To do the latter is to do the former; the two things are inseparable."

Among the ugly and bestial qualities of mankind, Wells listed transmittable disease, bodily deformations, the criminally insane, and "even the incurable alcoholic". The fact that he was referring to the metaphorical death of each trait cannot disguise that this would require very real death for countless individual lives. "In the new vision death is no inexplicable horror, no pointless terminal terror to the miseries of life," Wells philosophises. "It is the end of all pain of life, the end of the bitterness of failure, the merciful obliteration of the weak and silly and pointless things. The new ethics will hold life to be a privilege and a responsibility... and the alternative in right conduct between living fully, beautifully, and efficiently will be to die."

"For a multitude of contemptible and silly creatures," Wells continues, "fear-driven and helpless and useless, unhappy or hatefully happy in the midst of squalid dishonour, feeble, ugly, inefficient, born of unrestrained lusts, and increasing and multiplying through sheer incontinence and stupidity, the men of the New Republic will have little pity and less benevolence. The men of the New Republic will not be squeamish, either, in facing or inflicting death, because they will have a fuller sense of the possibilities of life than we possess. They will have an ideal that will make killing worthwhile."

Wells was always keen to explore the impact of clashing civilisations.

These views are far from easy on the modern eye, but they are characteristic of the mixture of ambition, arrogance and righteousness on which the British Empire was built. It would be easy to now dismiss Wells as nothing more than a dinosaur, but that would be to ignore the world in which he lived. We like to point at atrocities like the Holocaust as if they would only be possible at the hands of others, but anti-Semitism, Fascism and a belief in the power of Eugenics were definitive of the age. Perhaps it would be easier for the contemporary reader to digest if someone as creatively important as Wells was fully enlightened, but history teaches us otherwise. Genius doesn't often sit well with perfection. The trauma of the two World Wars and a past littered with broken promises and wildly inaccurate views eventually eroded Wells's optimism to nothing. The reality of humanity – and, indeed, of his own character – had seldom matched up to the visions of perfection he offered the world, and among his final works was *Mind At The End Of Its Tether*, in which he wrote, "Mankind is ultimately doomed, and its prospect is not salvation, but extinction. Despite all the hopes in science, the end must be darkness still."

Wells would die a near broken man, making no secret of his distaste for life and the disappointments it had thrown at him ever since that failed science exam at the Normal School. But this is certainly not the way to remember him. Wells gave more to science fiction than anyone in history and, for all his faults, struggled to use his influence for good, however misguided. W Warren Wagar says it best: "The way to honour Wells is to pause, remember what he achieved, and then get on with our own work. Let the critics be damned. Study the future. Invent the future. Try to bring it under rational control, for the good of all mankind. From his corner of Valhalla, that is surely what HG Wells will always be telling us to do."

The Shape Of Things To Come

Wells's vision of the future still resonates today

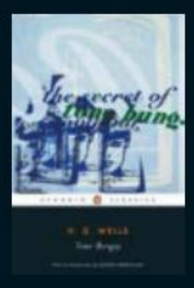
If HG Wells is the father of science fiction, then it follows that the entire genre grew from his burning desire to address the problems he perceived in the world around him to build a better future.

Despite Wells' use of a narrative device claiming the book to be the product of a series of dreams experienced by the eminent diplomat Dr Philip Raven, *The Shape Of Things To Come* reads far more like a history textbook. Charting the years between 1933 – its year of publication – and 2106, Wells leaves no stone unturned in describing our collective future.

The bloody global war that leads mankind to the edge of the precipice is a disturbing prediction of the horrors of World War II. But Wells saw the carnage stopped by a plague that wipes away much of civilisation. From the ashes rises a dictatorship that banishes religion, promotes science, and establishes a universal language.

Wells often argued for the potential benefits of dictatorship, the evidence as he sees it is all here. The message is clear: only through co-operation and ideological harmony on a global scale can humanity ever hope to reach utopia, and it has seldom been more passionately argued.

THE WAR IN THE AIR
1908
The events of WWI would be foreshadowed with this story of an young man's experiences as a fighter pilot during a global conflict.



TONO-BUNGAY
1909
The eponymous substance is used as a conduit to explore the corruption of a society that allows the selfish and evil to prosper.

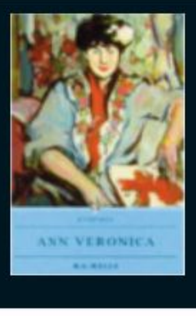
THE HISTORY OF MR POLLY
1910
This is understated story of an ordinary man forced to take control of his life in the face of disaster.

THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY
1920
After WWI, Wells decided that a new history textbook was required. This sold in huge numbers.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME
1933
The Shape Of Things To Come speculates on world events from 1933 until 2106.

THE HOLY TERROR
1939
As the threat of World War became hideous reality for the second time in his life, Wells wrote this exploration of the psychological development of a dictator.

1910 1915 1920 1930



ANN VERONICA
1909
Wells used this novel to voice his concerns over the treatment of women in society, with the heroine reportedly based on his alleged mistress, Amber Reeves.

THE LAST WAR
1914
Retitled *The World Set Free* in 1991, this novel is mostly notable for Wells's unnervingly accurate predictions of atomic power and its uses as a weapon.

MEN LIKE GODS
1923
Wells's fascination with utopian societies surfaces again, with this story of visitors from Earth being rejected by a society for the dangers they present.

STAR BEGOTTEN
1937
Wells again explores Martian intelligence, referencing *The War Of The Worlds* as having been written by, "Conan Doyle or one of those people."

9

THE STARGATE

Portal that allows rapid travel between distant locations, featured in the 1994 movie Stargate and subsequent television series

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
DESIGN: ★★★★★
OFFENSIVE POWERS: ★★★★★
SPEED OR RANGE: ★★★★★

■ THE STARGATE IS a portal between worlds, built by the Ancients and able to create an artificial wormhole in space which allows users to travel between one gate and another on the network in an instant, looking like an awe-inspiring puddle of water in its rest state.

The circular gate has nine points or chevrons around its circumference used to 'dial in' to a new location. The markings on the inner ring of the Stargate represent constellations – these are effectively the coordinates used to pinpoint other worlds.

The Stargate is a beautiful piece of design, inspired by Egyptian antiquity and taking on a life of its own thanks to the rich back-story built up by the television show *Stargate SG-1* and its successor *Stargate Atlantis*.

FEAR THE alien

RIDLEY SCOTT'S ALIEN NOT ONLY HELPED REVOLUTIONISE THE WAY TRADITIONAL SCIENCE FICTION FILMS WERE VIEWED, IT ALSO PAVED THE WAY FOR ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL FRANCHISES IN CINEMA. HERE WE CHART THE HISTORY OF THE SILVER SCREEN'S MOST DANGEROUS XENOMORPH

Watch Alien today in a world of cutting-edge science-fiction TV shows and a post *Matrix/Star Wars* barrage of over-the-top CGI, and – bar the occasional ropey effect – it remains an incredible film, and one that's influence reaches far and wide. Despite the relative simplicity of the script, director Ridley Scott, co-writer Dan O'Bannon and a selection of solid character actors helped turn *Alien* into one of the most significant sci-fi flicks around.

Interestingly though, while *Alien* has helped influence an entire genre, it was hardly an original idea, with even co-writer Dan O'Bannon admitting: "I didn't steal *Alien* from anybody. I stole it from everybody."

Planet Of The Vampires, *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* and *Forbidden Planet* are just a few of the sources O'Bannon was inspired by, and then there's O'Bannon's previous film script, *Dark Star*. While there are many references, to O'Bannon's previous script, it was the alien hunting down the ship's crew that O'Bannon wanted to return to. In fact, as far as O'Bannon was concerned, the xenomorph was more important than the ship's crew. "I didn't want to stop and tell the life stories of these characters, because I didn't care," he admits. "I just cared about the monster that was going to kill them."

Convinced that he and fellow co-writer Ronald Shusett had a potential hit on their hands, O'Bannon started gauging interest for the film and almost struck a deal with the infamous Roger Corman. Fortunately, O'Bannon was told that he could get a potentially better deal with a company called Brandywine, which was owned by David Giler, Walter Hill and Gordon Carroll. The troika of producers already had a production deal with 20th Century Fox, so at the last possible moment, *Alien* had the backing it needed and a director in the form of Walter Hill.

Sadly, O'Bannon was less than happy with the various re-writes that Giler and Hill put in place for the final screenplay, and the friction that began in pre-production soon spilled on to the actual set. There was no denying that the screenplay still had great potential though, and with Hill no longer down to direct, the script was sent out to other potential candidates, including a certain Ridley Scott…

"What I liked about [*Alien*] was that when I first read it I thought, 'I'm going to do this' and I was literally sitting at home in Hampstead," recalls Scott, who later admitted that he was actually sixth in line to direct the film. "I picked up my phone, called my

“I’ve always said that all my movies are love stories”
James Cameron

10

THE ALIEN

Deadly antagonist of the Alien franchise, designed by Swiss surrealist HR Giger for Ridley Scott’s sci-fi horror classic they quickly became the heart of a franchise

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ DESIGNED BY Swiss artist HR Giger, the alien is nightmarish organism both terrifying and sexually charged with an intentionally discomforting life cycle. A facehugger hatched from an egg forcibly attaches itself to a living host, impregnating it. The alien embryo then erupts from the host’s chest after its gestation period causing death and growing into a deadly predator in a grotesque 2 for 1 of body horror and sheer terror.

The creature was played by 7’2” Nigerian art student Bolaji Badejo in *Alien* and used sparingly, which only added to the tension. As the film series evolved, so has the creature with *Alien Resurrection* using CGI aliens, however Badejo’s performance has a creepiness that’s yet to be recaptured.

Crew of the USCSS Nostromo

Brett
Harry Dean Stanton
Rank
Engineering technician

Ash
Ian Holm
Rank
Science Officer

Lambert
Veronica Cartwright
Rank
Navigator

Kane
John Hurt
Rank
Executive Officer

Dallas
Tom Skerritt
Rank
Captain

Jones
Rank
Cat

Ellen Ripley
Sigourney Weaver
Rank
Warrant Officer

Parker
Yaphet Kotto
Rank
Chief Engineer

An Unholy Birth

The bodysnatching species in the Alien films are truly frightening creatures – here's how they evolve from baby to brute...

The Alien Queen
Not only is this 14-foot tall xenomorph extremely vicious, she's a veritable egg-laying machine and squeezes out eggs quicker than her acidic blood burns through metal. But what really came first? The Alien Queen or the egg?

The Egg
Here's a handy tip. Next time you're on a foreign planet you may want to stay away from any alien spaceships you find. You will certainly not want to approach the ominous looking eggs that line the floor around you and you'd be mad to look inside one when it finally opens up. Just ask John Hurt.

The Facehugger
The Facehugger is a dangerous parasite that will attach itself to any host that's foolish enough to come into contact with it. It impregnates its host and inserts an embryo into the being's chest cavity. Just ask John Hurt. Alternatively, the Praetorian Facehugger infects the host with a queen embryo.

The Chestburster
The Chestburster likes nothing better than to burst from its host's chest, spraying anyone around it in a shower of blood. Just ask John Hurt. While the *Space Ball*s variation is most likely to don a top hat and burst into song, the traditional Chestburster will flee its host's body as quickly as possible.

The Alien Warrior
Also known as drones, these deadly foes are mainly seen in a humanoid form that is roughly around seven feet in height. However, they will adopt different form variations if non-humans are impregnated.

The sets in *Alien* were incredible and dripping with atmosphere.

John Hurt wonders if he's got an alien living in him or just has extremely bad indigestion...

agent and said 'I'm doing this', and within 22 hours I was in LA."

Although the script was far from original, Scott saw its potential and was obviously eager to put his own spin on O'Bannon and Shusett's science-fiction yarn. "Actually, what *Alien* was, it was a B-movie," he reveals. "But I think, what happened is, we all elevated it beyond. Beyond, beyond actually." We're hardly going to disagree with the creator of *Blade Runner*, but Scott is being far from arrogant about *Alien*'s eventual success. Like virtually every other film in the series, *Alien* shows ingenuity, boasted a visionary director who was often fighting (or in the case of Fincher, losing) against tight budgets and internal problems, and features continually solid performances from Sigourney Weaver – easily one of sci-fi's biggest unsung heroes.

Indeed, ask anybody to name a popular sci-fi character, and Lieutenant Ellen Ripley normally falls a long way behind the likes of Luke Skywalker, Captain Kirk, the Terminator and even the alien itself. This certainly is criminal, as she's one of the few actors to ever be nominated for an Oscar as a leading actress in what's normally an overlooked genre. Could you ever see Harrison Ford or Arnold Schwarzenegger getting nominated for best actor for their portrayals of Han Solo or the Terminator? Thought not...

While it was Cameron's super-charged sequel, *Aliens,* that saw Weaver earn her first Academy nomination, Scott was in no doubt that she would be perfect for the role of sole survivor Ellen Ripley (a part that had originally gone to co-star Tom Skerritt, before producer Alan Ladd Jr heard that Fox were working on other films featuring strong female leads). "This beautiful giant walked into the room," recalls Scott about his first meeting with Weaver. "In she walked and I thought ah, that's it, that's it. It was that simple."

Weaver's casting was the icing on a very delectable cake that featured some of the finest character actors around. Harry Dean Stanton, John Hurt, Ian Holm, Yaphet Kotto, Veronica Cartwright and the aforementioned Tom Skerritt rounded off the rest of the Nostromo's crew and brought a gravitas that was previously missing from other science fiction movies of the period. With *Alien* being Scott's second film after the critically received *The Duellists*, he knew he needed a very strong cast behind him, particularly with Fox anxious for him to start filming as soon as possible. "I was very, very meticulous about casting, because I figure that if you cast right, from a director's point of view, at least 50 per cent of your problems are over on the day," he continues. "I took a lot of time casting, so eventually they [Fox] were getting uneasy thinking I didn't really know what I was doing. I was kind of bemused by that and was basically thinking back off, because when you see it, you see it."

One of the few instances that the terrifying alien is just a man in a suit.

With his cast in place, Ridley made sure his $11 million budget stretched as far as possible. The Nostromo, the huge ship that the crew manned, was constructed from old plane parts salvaged from junk yards, while effects like the movement seen when John Hurt examines the alien's egg, was nothing more than Scott making fluttering movements with his hands inside the actual prosthetic. Despite the many corners that Scott had to cut in order to bring his vision to the screen, *Alien* continually dripped with atmosphere and menace, and that was before the alien had even appeared.

Created by Swiss surrealist HR Giger (who went on to win an Academy award), the alien was a creature of dark beauty that

> "This beautiful giant walked in... I thought ah, that's it, that's Ellen Ripley. It was that simple"
> James Cameron

terrified cinema-goers all over the world. "All of Giger's designs have a real sexual undercurrent to them," explains James Cameron, *Aliens*' director. "And that's what I think horrified people about the alien as much as anything, in that it worked on a kind of Freudian subconscious level." From the vaginal-like opening of the alien's eggs to the phallus-shaped Chestbuster, the blatant sexual references seen in Giger's twisted creations would have been almost laughable if they weren't so damn terrifying. As Spielberg found while he was making *Jaws*, Scott quickly realised that less was definitely more, and, bar a few shots shown later in the film you'd never believe that the terrifying xenomorph that nearly succeeds in slaying the entire crew was nothing more than a 7'2" Nigerian in a rubber suit. But then, as O'Bannon admits, the slow reveal of Giger's monstrous creation was typical Scott.

"You've got to admit, Ridley is a master of atmosphere," he begins. "When it comes to texturing a scene – texture, mood, subtlety of mood and feeling and atmosphere – Scott really is superb and you get a lot of that in *Alien*. I mean without it, it would have been a much lesser picture. When you're doing a scary movie, a horror story, a suspense movie, naturally plot is important as well but so is atmosphere, and a horror movie that is not atmospheric is not a pleasing thing to watch. *Alien* needed it and he provided it."

Scott may not have been the first director of choice, but whenever you return to his stylistic movie, it's impossible to think how anyone else could have done a better job. Kane's discovery of the alien egg, and his subsequent death when the Chestburster finally breaks free of its doomed host; Dallas negotiating the air vents of the Nostromo with the xenomorph hot on his tail; the grandiose scope of the alien planet that the doomed crew are first called to; the real identity of Ian Holm's Ash. Scott's deft touch drips from literally every frame, and we've often wondered what would have happened to the franchise (especially the later films) had he'd decided to stay on board.

Still, Scott decided that it was time to move on and the reins of the franchise were handed over to another up and coming director – James Cameron...

"It started as a treatment," recalls Cameron about how he landed one of sci-fi cinema's most exciting gigs. "I was having a meeting with David Giler and Walter Hill, about another project and the pitch was not going very well. As I was getting up and making my way towards the door David Giler said: 'Well we do have this other thing, *Alien 2*.' All kinds of pinball machine lights and bells went off

inside my head, but I maintained an absolutely straight face and said: 'Well you know, that could be interesting.' "

Cameron was certainly interested and immediately after his meeting spent three days straight adapting a story he'd already written called *Mother*. Set on a huge space base and featuring elements like the power loader that would make such an impact in the final film, Cameron simply dropped Ripley into the mix, added a bunch of space marines and turned in the 50-page treatment to Giler. Carroll, Hill and Giler were ecstatic with Cameron's treatment and immediately gave him the go ahead to start working on the script. Cameron's initial exaltation immediately turned to frustration when he found out on exactly the same day that he had also been hired to write the script for *Rambo II*. "I called [Brandywine] and asked Giler what I should do and he said: 'Well, don't be stupid, take both jobs,' " recalls Cameron. "So I took both jobs and also had to do a re-write of *The Terminator* script, as they were going to start production in February. Basically I had a three month period where I had to write three scripts."

Cameron may have had his work cut out, but it was nothing compared to the realisation that his lead actress wasn't even attached to the actual movie... "I was told that she was on board and I should just toddle off and write the film, when in fact, no deal had been made with her whatsoever," remembers Cameron. "So here was a script that was written that everybody wanted to make in which [Weaver] was in every scene and they hadn't made a deal with her. That's why she got her first big payday of her acting career. She got a million bucks which was a big deal at that time."

With Weaver on board, Cameron, his producer wife, Gale Anne Hurd, and the rest of the crew set up shop at Pinewood Studios in England, and the two vastly different cultures immediately began to clash, mainly because the structured work ethic of Pinewood was vastly different to the style Cameron was used to. "The interesting thing about shooting in England wasn't just the culture clash. For me, it was also a transition from a non-union guerrilla-filmmaking mentality, which started at Roger Corman's New World Pictures and continued on *The Terminator*, which was made very fast with a non-union crew, to an actual union picture," confirms Cameron. "And also, the particular way that they work in England was very, very different, and so there was an adaptation to that as well. I thought that there were a lot of people on the crew that were, to use a charitable term, comfortable, and that was completely foreign to me. I'd been used to working with young, eager, hardcore, dedicated film folks. They all had something to prove, but a lot of the people especially at the Pinewood Studios at that time were lifers. They had permanent employment. It didn't matter what movie they were working on. They kind of got pushed on us. If you did Pinewood, you had to use their people. It was a whole different mentality, so I pushed against that as hard as I could. If I hadn't, we wouldn't have got the film done on budget and on schedule, which we did."

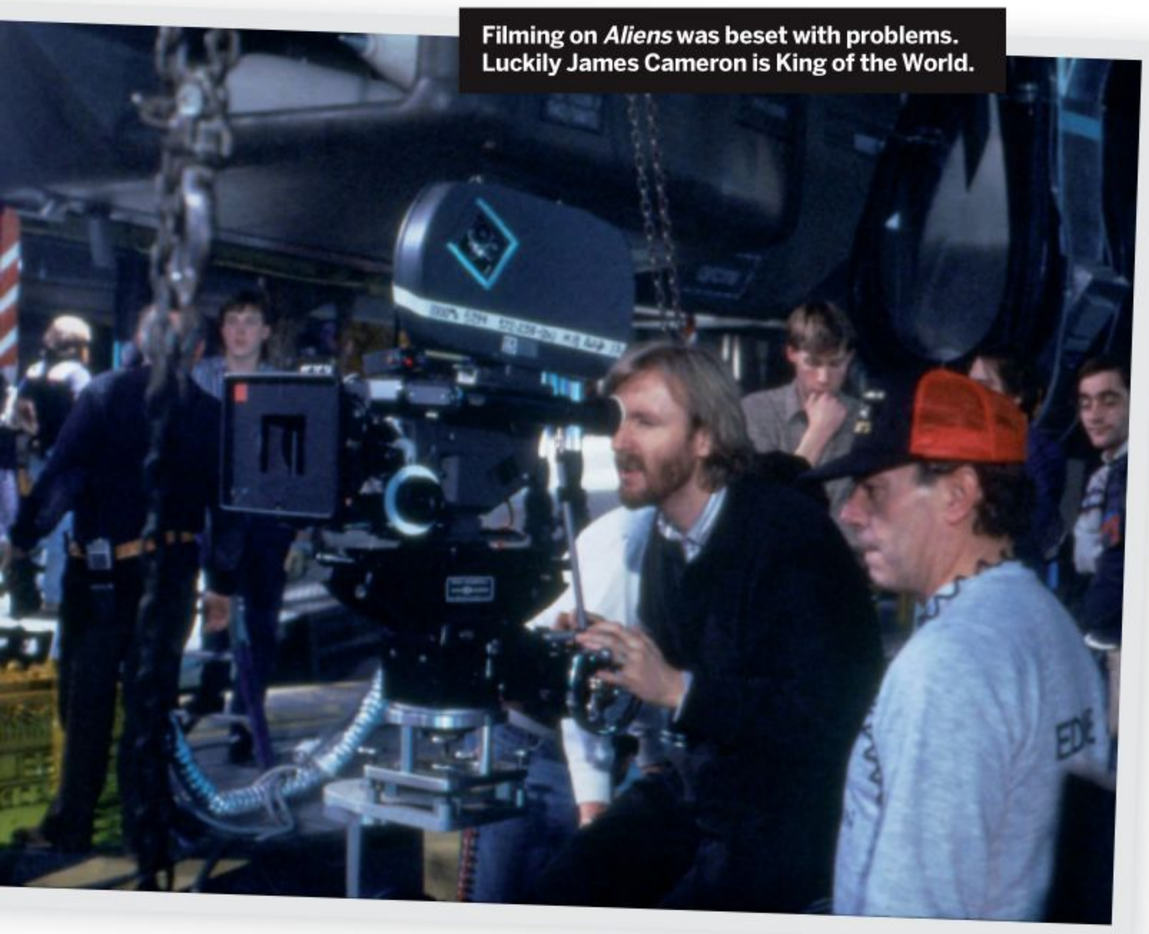
As well as having to deal with a difficult team – including a second unit director, who would have persuaded the entire crew to continue striking if it wasn't for the intervention of Cameron's wife – Cameron also found himself having to deal with Weaver, who thanks to her inflated pay packet, had her own ideas about Ripley's on-screen direction. "There were a couple of things she asked if she could do when we had our first meeting," recalls Cameron. "She wanted to die in the film, she wanted to not use guns and she wanted to make love to the alien. And between the third and fourth films she got to do all those things. But fortunately for this film, I said no to all of them, even though I was petrified about the result. I thought she'd bolt from the project, but she didn't. She did have certain specific things she thought should be done in the *Alien* mythos and when she got to a position of power on the later films she made that happen."

For the moment though, *Aliens* was Cameron's flick, and the end result was a balls to the walls blastathon that not only featured an army of xenomorphs for the soon to be outmatched marines to deal with, but also showed Ripley's caring side, as she did everything in her power to protect a young girl called Newt – the sole survivor of the alien onslaught. "I've always said that all my movies are love stories," said Cameron about Ripley's relationship with the distraught Newt. "*Aliens* is about parental love and protectiveness and a sense of duty and the ultimate sacrifice a person would make given that sense of duty."

> "She wanted to die in the film, she wanted to not use guns and she wanted to make love to the alien"
> James Cameron

Despite Cameron's insistence that *Aliens* was a story about love, there was a more obvious theme that ran throughout *Aliens'* 137-minute running time... "One of the themes of the film is these technologically advanced soldiers succumb to a technologically inferior, but much more determined enemy that they don't know how to fight," begins Cameron. "It's a Vietnam metaphor where basically US forces got their butts kicked by barefoot guys running through the jungle because they didn't understand how to fight that war. They didn't understand their enemy or their determination. They think they can handle anything because they've got firepower."

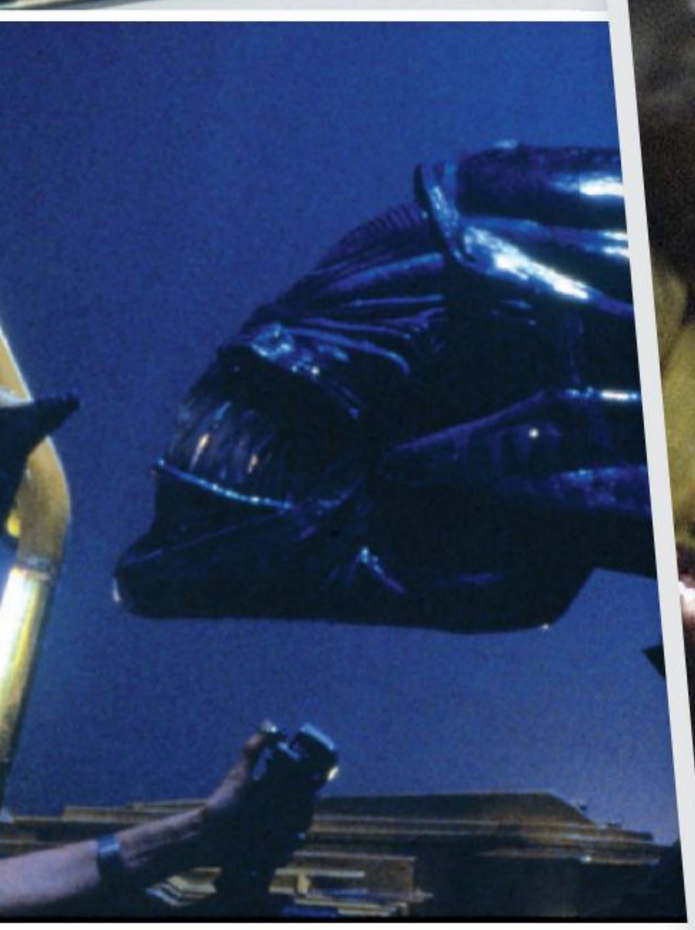
Over-the-top blast-fest it may have been, but Cameron still paid careful attention to Scott's seminal film, and many parallels can be found throughout the two movies. Perhaps the most obvious though, is that, like *Alien* before it, *Aliens* continued the trend of well-written characters for an otherwise throwaway genre, and while Cameron regulars Michael Biehn and Bill Paxton were notable standouts, Carrie Henn – the ten-year-old actress who played Newt – was Weaver's biggest rival in the acting stakes, despite the fact that she had no formal training and never made any other films. "Carrie was found at a US Air Force base in England," recalls *Aliens* producer Gale Anne Hurd. "Her father was a US serviceman serving there, and ▷



Filming on *Aliens* was beset with problems. Luckily James Cameron is King of the World.

"Get away from her you bitch!"

Yes, they look big bad and tough, but our money's on the aliens.



Game over man, game over

There's been a variety of videogames based on Fox's franchise, so here's a look at some of the best and worst from the franchise's history

Alien

Released: 1984 // **Systems:** C64, Spectrum, Amstrad

Yes it looks ropier than a ten-foot length of rope, but if you can get past the primitive-looking visuals you'll find a fairly atmospheric strategy title. Taking control of the Nostromo's crew, your aim is to track down the alien that's escaped from Kane's body and is currently running amok on the ship.

Aliens

Released: 1986 // **Systems:** C64, Spectrum, Amstrad

Although several 8-bit titles were released to tie in with the *Aliens* franchise, this offering from Electric Dreams is easily the best. Essentially mimicking the scene where the marines first encounter the aliens, the first-person effort is chock-full of shocks and just drips with atmosphere. An instant classic.

Alien Vs Predator

Released: 1993 // **Systems:** SNES

Ignoring Capcom's superb scrolling fighter, Activision decided that what gamers really wanted was a dull beat-'em-up that featured awful animation, non-existent gameplay and aliens that were able to smell the invisible Predators. We'd rather be impregnated by a Facehugger than play this woeful licence.

Alien 3

Released: 1993 // **Systems:** SNES

Ignore the versions that appeared on the Mega Drive and various 8 and 16-bit computers and plump for this far superior SNES offering. Huge levels, multiple tasks and some excellent aesthetics mean this wonderful offering from Acclaim captures the spirit of Fincher's underrated movie.

Alien Vs. Predator

Released: 1999 // **Systems:** PC, Mac

Yet another release from Rebellion, this offering upped the ante in every way possible and delivered an amazingly tense experience, especially if you played as the wall-crawling, head-biting alien. Worth tracking down for the insane multiplayer that pitches all three foes against each other.

Aliens: Colonial Marines

Released: 2013 // **Systems:** PS3, Xbox 360, PC

This action-heavy adaptation of the series had a troubled development period, changing hands a number of times, and that unfortunately showed in the final release. The game was littered with unintentionally hilarious bugs, and was critically panned as a result.

Alien Isolation

Released: 2014 // **Systems:** PS4, Xbox One, PC

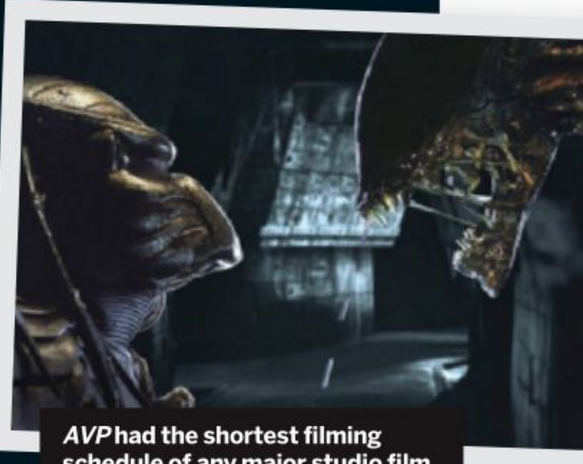
The most recent attempt at an *Alien* game succeeded in capturing the atmosphere of the original movie – with gamers playing an underpowered Ripley trying desperately to avoid an intensely menacing xenomorph. It proved divisive amongst fans, but *Isolation* is easily the scariest *Alien* game to date.

Duel of the fates

It should have been one of the greatest moments in creature feature history – the stars of the *Alien* and *Predator* franchises united on the silver screen. First hinted at when Danny Glover found himself in a Predator spaceship at the end of *Predator 2*, it took a further 14 years before the two foes would finally face each other.

Despite the initial excitement created by Paul Anderson, the end result was a lacklustre outing that failed to capture the majesty of these two monstrous icons. Flying in the face of the fan-favourite Dark Horse Comics' storylines, Anderson decided that some hocus pocus guff involving giant pyramids and that bloke who played Spud in *Trainspotting* would be far more entertaining.

The film's 2009 sequel *Alien Vs Predator: Requiem* fared little better, directed by music video hired guns and VFX specialists the Brothers Strause, it took the grudge match to smalltown America instead, offering up at least some measure of audience investment for what was largely the same ghastly WWE fodder. It does however feature a predator/alien hybrid in full bloom, which is nice.



***AVP* had the shortest filming schedule of any major studio film in 2004. Unfortunately it shows.**

Alien War creator Gary Gillies introduces Sigourney Weaver and Lance Henriksen.

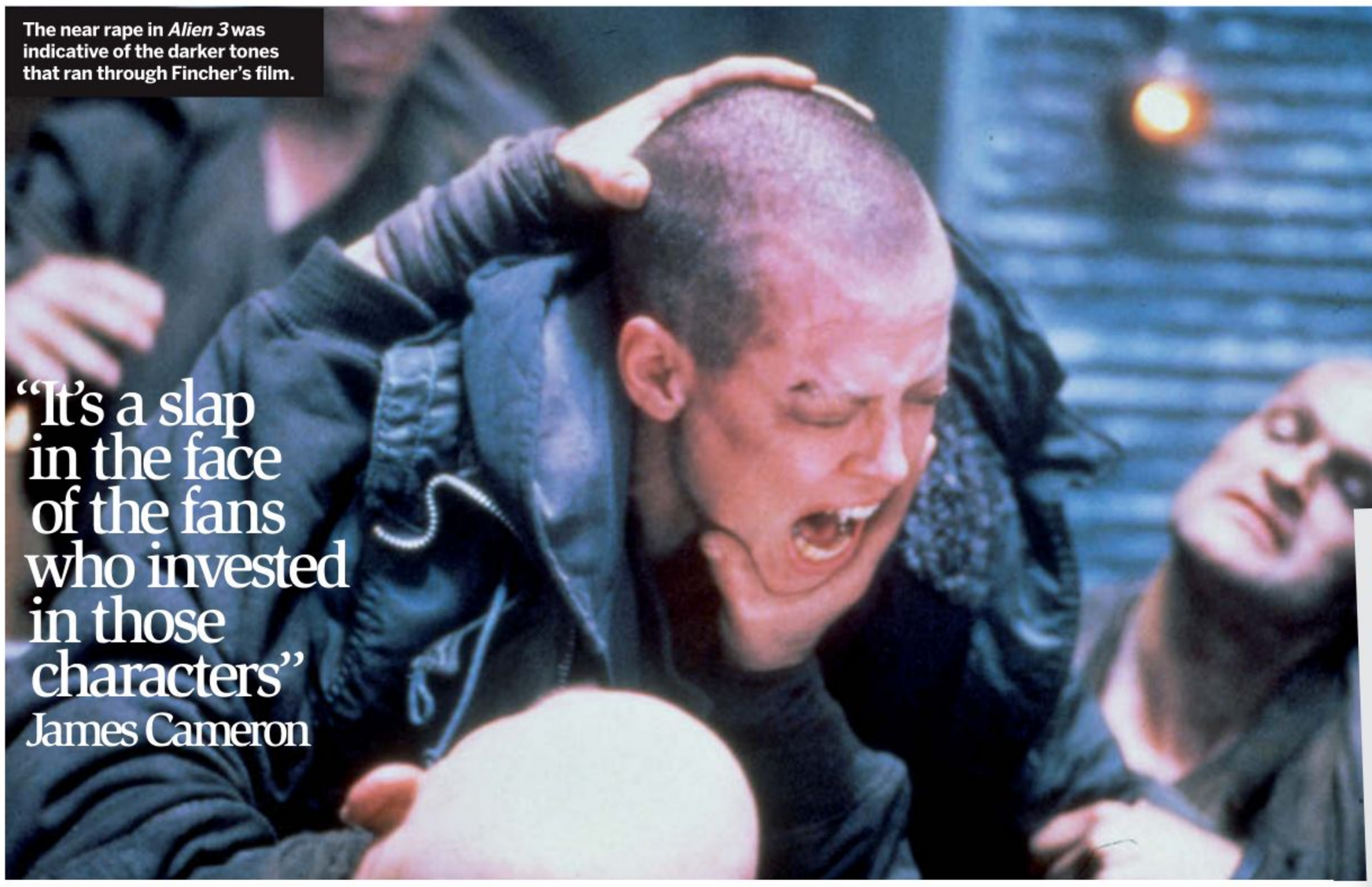
This time it's war

ALIEN WAR

Perhaps one of the most intriguing spin-offs of the *Alien* franchise was the aptly named 'Alien War', a total reality experience that saw members of the public being shown around a research centre by US colonial marines.

Housed in the basement of the Trocadero Centre in London, the attraction was opened by Sigourney Weaver on 15 October 1993, until it eventually closed in August 1996. Each show would start with members of the public being greeted by a colonial marine, who would then proceed to show them through an elaborately created alien research trailer. Predictably, as the tour progressed, the aliens themselves would appear and it wasn't unusual for either the marines, or even members of the general public, to be caught by the xenomorphs as they explored the labyrinth like corridors of the compound.

After the permanent attraction closed in '96 it soon started appearing in various exhibition centres up and down the country, albeit in a new modified form. A wonderful gimmick, and part of larger trend of such glorified ghost trains that sprung up in the wake of blockbusters, many a geek who grew up in the era still has fond memories of being snatched by a xenomorph.

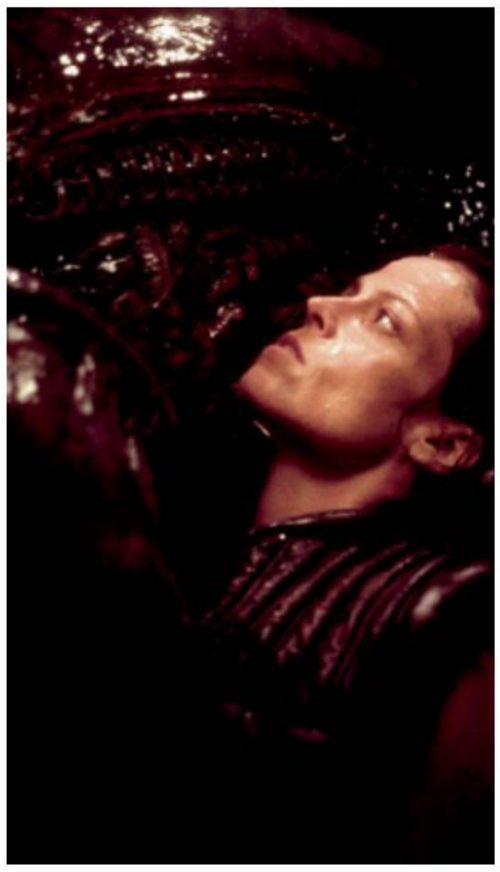


The near rape in *Alien 3* was indicative of the darker tones that ran through Fincher's film.

"It's a slap in the face of the fans who invested in those characters"
James Cameron

As Weaver's power grew, she was soon able to fulfil the wishes that didn't happen in the earlier films. Although why anyone would want to make love to a xenomorph is beyond us...

The set pieces in *Resurrection* are few and far between, but when they do come, they're always worth the wait.



Jean-Pierre Jeunet didn't speak any English when he started *Resurrection*.

she came in and auditioned, never having acted even in a school play, and was dead on from the very first reading." Despite Henn being seemingly perfect for the part, there were still worries about the young actress. "One of the things that we were very concerned about was whether or not the film would actually traumatise her," continues Hurd. "It was very intense and unlike now, where we could composite creatures in seamlessly, or create one digitally, she was really terrorised by the alien warriors in the film. Fortunately, she understood it was all make-believe."

It may have all been make-believe, but the superb special effects, magnificent central performances from Weaver and Henn and a string of exhilarating set-pieces proved that all the hardships Cameron and the rest of the crew went through resulted in one of the finest movies of its generation. With the success of the franchise assured, Fox was eager to push ahead with future sequels. Its third xenomorphic outing, though, proved to be the most testing of the entire quadrilogy...

Scott and Cameron may have faced their own share of troubles while bringing their visions to the screen, but it was nothing compared to what David Fincher actually had to go through. "You know... it was flawed from its inception and it was certainly flawed – actually pretty fucked up – well before we started shooting," Fincher told Todd Dougan for an interview in *The Digital Bits*.

Initially deemed as a critical and commercial failure on its original release, watch *Alien 3* now (especially, the far superior director's cut) and you will discover a film that while not as self-assured as its two elder peers, is no less impressive in its own way. Indeed, many of the crew involved see *Alien 3* as a more appropriate sequel to Ridley Scott's *Alien*, and while Fincher's insistence on making his mark aggrieved many at the time (particularly Cameron), when watching *Alien 3* today it's easy to see Fincher's unique trademark style, even if it is smothered by the heavy hand of Fox.

"David Fincher did a really good job I thought, photographically and so on," begins Cameron about the much-maligned movie. "I think it's a really well-made film, visually. It's just kind of a slap in the face of the fans who invested in Newt and Hicks and all those character relationships. I understand the instinct of course, which is you have to make it your own. I just don't think you should make it your own at the expense of what people like, personally. But everybody's got to make their own decisions."

A solitary alien that could run along ceilings, a prison planet full of dangerous inmates (complete with British accents), a notable lack of guns and, of course, the deaths of Hicks, Newt and Bishop, and later Ripley, were just a few of the many changes that fans were less than happy about, but Fincher seemed adamant on trying to make his own movie, even if it was several years later before his original directorial vision appeared on DVD.

"It was a thrill to work with David Fincher on his very first film, which was a very difficult task in a way," recalls *Alien 3*'s editor, Terry Rawlings. It was nothing to do with David, who I think did an incredible job. I just wish that he had fought for it harder in places because it became very difficult handling some of the front office at Fox. They never let us properly complete the film in Pinewood Studios before we left, so there were things outstanding for the film. So when we first got it all together, it just didn't quite work because of the areas that were missing."

With Ripley's death at the end of *Alien 3*, it seemed that Fox's franchise had come to the end of the line. You can't argue with nearly $160 million worldwide, though, and both the franchise and Ripley were resurrected courtesy of a screenplay by *Buffy* creator Joss Whedon. Set 200 years after the events of *Alien 3*, *Alien: Resurrection* revolves around the successful cloning of Ripley, so that scientists can extract the Alien Queen that she had been impregnated with. What's interesting, though, is that the DNA extractions are far from pure, and both Ripley and the Alien Queen share some of each other's traits. So while Ripley has acid for blood and is superhumanly strong, the Alien Queen is now able to give birth like a normal human. The end result, the Alien Newborn, is one of the most ludicrous monsters to ever appear on the silver screen, and has much more in common with an extra from *The Muppet Show* as opposed to HR Giger's original alien creations.

Despite plenty of gory and humorous touches by acclaimed French director Jean-Pierre Jeunet, who at the time, couldn't speak a word of English, *Resurrection* is nowhere near as enjoyable as the other three films in the series and plays more like a straight-forward slashathon in places – the very sort of movie that Scott was so adamant in not replicating. While both Weaver and Winona Ryder, as android with a conscience Call, elevated the otherwise hokey dialogue and Jeunet was able to create the odd inspired set piece – the underwater chase is a particular standout – *Resurrection* is a somewhat disappointing end to an otherwise superb franchise, and along with *Alien 3* is the ultimate example of diminishing returns. As was the case with Fincher's time on the franchise, the finished product was far from what was originally envisioned, especially concerning Whedon's original screenplay, which caused him to say the following to *Bullz-Eye.com* in 2005: "It was mostly a matter of doing everything wrong. They said the lines... mostly... but they said them all wrong. And they cast it wrong. And they designed it wrong. And they scored it wrong. They did everything wrong that they could possibly do. There's actually a fascinating lesson in filmmaking, because everything that they did reflects back to the script or looks like something from the script, and people assume that, if I hated it, then they'd changed the script... but it wasn't so much that they'd changed the script; it's that they just executed it in such a ghastly fashion as to render it almost unwatchable."

Whedon is overly harsh in his opinion, as *Resurrection* is nowhere near as bad as he suggests. But fittingly, 2012's confused and contentious prequel divided opion just as violently.

Helmed by Ridley Scott, *Prometheus* wriggled out of any attempt to pin it down as a direct prequel tying neatly into the original, instead taking place on a planet similar to the one stumbled upon by the hapless crew of the Nostromo in *Alien* - along with similar themes and character archetypes such as the Noomi Rapace's Ripley-like survivor Elizabeth Shaw and Michael Fassbender's Ash-like android David. It introducing the Engineers, who tied the first film's enigmatic Space Jockey into the myth of 'ancient astronauts' responsible for early humanity's evolution in the writings of Erich von Däniken, and held up a barage of interesting themes about the responsibility of the creator to the creation. *Prometheus* confused the already complex biology of the titular aliens with a new convoluted life-cycle for the Xenomorph, finally revealed at the end of the film in a new form, birthed from the ribcage of an errant Engineer and quickly dubbed the 'Deacon' due to its tapered head. For all its flaws, *Prometheus* nonetheless added a new dimension to the *Alien* mythos. Rather than conclusively ending any debate about the mysterious he introduced in the first film, Ridley Scott - true to form - simply replaced them with a whole new set. With a *Prometheus* sequel on the cards, Scott is doubtless set to muddy the waters even further.

ELLEN RIPLEY

11

ELLEN RIPLEY

Warrant Officer of the spaceship Nostromo, protagonist of the Alien series, Ellen Ripley went through hell and thanks to Weyland-Yutani, keeps going back

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ LAST SURVIVOR of the Nostromo, Ellen Ripley is the first lady of modern science fiction. Introduced in Ridley Scott's *Alien*, she alone survives out of her crewmates when a deadly alien life form infiltrates the ship.

She takes centre stage from the outset of *Aliens*, awoken from stasis 57 years after her ordeal and becomes a surrogate mother to another survivor called Newt while kicking arse against the creature infestation on the terraformed LV-426.

The character's demise in *Alien³* and resurrection as a clone split fans but her legacy is huge. Ripley isn't a damsel, love interest or a sidekick and her maternal drive set against the Alien Queen's in *Aliens* makes for one of the most spine-tingling moments in all of science fiction.

THE ANATOMY OF THE PREDATOR

WHEN JIM AND JOHN THOMAS CAME UP WITH A SUITABLE PROTAGONIST FOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER'S LATEST MOVIE, LITTLE DID THEY KNOW THAT THEIR OTHERWORLDLY CREATION WOULD GO ON TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC MONSTERS SINCE HR GIGER'S ALIEN. SCIFINOW EXAMINES THE QUINTET OF MOVIES FEATURING THE DEADLIEST HUNTER IN THE UNIVERSE...

The *Predator* franchise has been a big success for 20th Century Fox, with its three films and two crossover movies generating over $584 million off a $190 million outlay. As the original film approaches its 25th anniversary and news of a sequel to *Predators* refuses to die, SciFiNow felt it was the perfect time to revisit the original film and its numerous spin-offs.

Predator's origins are interesting, having sprung from a joke about Sylvester Stallone's Rocky Balboa; Hollywood executives remarked that the fictional boxer would have to battle an alien, as there was no one on Earth left to fight. Two brothers, Jim and John Thomas, took the joke seriously, and began to craft a movie about an alien that came to Earth and did just that.

"We had an idea about a brotherhood of hunters who came from another planet to hunt all kinds of things," recalls Jim Thomas on the 'Making Of...' featurette included with the *Predator* DVD. "We realised that wouldn't work very well, so we picked one hunter who was going to hunt the most dangerous species, which had to be man. And the most dangerous man was a combat soldier."

With their idea, the two brothers shipped their script around Hollywood, and it wasn't long before it came to the attention of Arnold Schwarzenegger. The Austrian actor was a hot property in Hollywood thanks to recent turns in *Conan The Barbarian*, *The Terminator* and *Commando*. Who better to be stalked by the universe's deadliest hunter?

As the script generated buzz, Fox green-lit the project and handed it over to producer Joel Silver, who had been involved with *48 Hrs* and *Commando*, and was working on Mel Gibson vehicle *Lethal Weapon* (which was released in 1987, the same year as *Predator*). Silver immediately got in touch with producer Lawrence Gordon, and together they started courting a suitable director. One of their early choices was New Zealander Geoff Murphy, who had found success with *Utu* and *The Quiet Earth*. In a 1985 interview with *OnLine Magazine*, he revealed his plans for 'Hunter', as *Predator* was then known.

***Predator* would help cement Arnold Schwarzenegger as Hollywood's go-to action star.**

"It's called 'Hunter', and it's about an alien who comes to Earth on safari to hunt the most dangerous animal on earth – an American anti-insurgency commando. It's basically a sneaky-poo through the bush. I've done a bit of that before. There's suspense and frightening people, and I can do that. I look at it and I think, 'Yeah, I can do this picture, and I can do a really craftsman-like job on it. I can frighten people. I can probably make them laugh a few times too. I can say a little bit about the military, just in passing.' So I say yes. But Fox can still say no."

Fox did say no, and it wasn't long before he was no longer attached to 'Hunter'. It's unclear why Murphy was dropped, but in the very same interview that he had discussed the possibility of working on 'Hunter', he made it quite clear that he wasn't a fan of Schwarzenegger. He'd already turned down the chance to direct *Conan III* without meeting the franchise's star on the basis that "I didn't need to. I watched *Conan*."

With Schwarzenegger firmly attached to the project as Major Alan 'Dutch' Schaefer, Silver, Gordon and co-producer John Davis went ahead and hired John McTiernan, who would go on to have huge success in the action genre thanks to a string of blockbuster hits such as *Die Hard* and *The Hunt For Red October*. At the time of *Predator*, though, he was a relatively unknown quantity, although his first film, the Pierce Brosnan-starring *Nomads*, suggested that he'd be a suitable fit for the mixture of action and horror that *Predator* would require.

12

PREDATOR

Alien species known to trophy hunt the galaxy's most feared killers, the Predator is armed with fearsome technology but prefers its kill up close and personal

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ THE SUBJECT of movies, video games and comics, the Predator is a lethal hunter who stalks enemies worthy of the challenge for trophies. The creature is most dangerous when camouflaged, shadowing prey unseen except for that trademark shimmer and the tracking of the telltale laser sight on its shoulder cannon.

About seven foot tall, armour-clad with a helmet concealing angry-looking mandibles he lives up to his name in the 1987 film, tracking and killing a Special Forces group one by one until only leader Dutch (Arnold Schwarzenegger) is left standing.

The *Alien* skull spotted in *Predator 2* has led on to crossover comics, films and videogames featuring the two iconic species in combat, but the first solo film remains the ultimate big game hunter's finest hour.

THE BEST PREDATOR QUOTES

The most memorable lines from the franchise

Predator

Blain: "This stuff will make you a God damned sexual Tyrannosaurus, just like me."

Dutch: You're one... ugly motherfucker!

Poncho: "You're bleeding, man. You're hit."
Blain: "I ain't got time to bleed."

Billy: I'm scared Poncho."
Poncho: "Bullshit. You ain't afraid of no man."
Billy: There's something out there waiting for us, and it ain't no man. We're all going to die."

Dutch:" What the hell are you?"
Predator: "What the hell are you?"

Dutch: "If it bleeds we can kill it."

Predator 2

Lieutenant Mike Harrigan: "OK pussyface, it's your move.

Gold Tooth: "King Willie says, not only do I have to kill you, but I have to take your soul. Voodoo magic. Fucking voodoo magic, man!"

Predators

Royce: "Now, let's find a way off this fucking planet."

Stans: Wow, what a shithole. You live here?
Noland: Oh, no. No. This is my summer home. I winter in the Riviera. The schools are so much nicer there. And the men... Ooh, la, la! By the way, you're welcome.

Mombasa: "Wound one man. Make him suffer. Make him bleed. Make him call out for help, and set a trap and kill those who come. I know because I have done this."

With a director and star in place, it was time to secure suitable actors to portray Schwarzenegger's team of elite super soldiers. The final selection was eclectic to say the least; Carl Weathers was immediately hired to play George Dillon, Dutch's one time friend and now-CIA agent; ex-Navy Seal and wrestler Jesse Ventura played Blain Cooper; Elpidia Carrillo, a popular Mexican actress, portrayed guerrilla Anna; writer Shane Black was drafted in to play radio operator Rick Hawkins (and potentially rewrite the script), while Sonny Landham, who played tracker Billy, had originally started out in the porn industry.

Although *Predator* boasted a solid cast, it proved to be a difficult movie to make, with numerous production difficulties that required overcoming. By far the biggest issue was actually working in the Mexican jungle of Palenque with a predominantly Mexican crew, as the topography presented all sorts of issues for the inexperienced McTiernan, both from a technical and practical point of view.

"It was difficult to manoeuvre in the jungle," he reveals. "It was one of the worst nightmares I'd ever seen. We had 300 Mexican crew members, and most of them had nothing to do, and we didn't really have any way of organising them and communicating what we were trying to do. So for the first week or so there were about six of us who were making the movie.

The lack of communication was further slowed by having to deal with the Mexican union. Many of the higher-ups were lifers, having worked in the film industry since the Thirties, and proved to be set in their ways, which clearly frustrated McTiernan. The fledgling director was also having issues with the jungle itself due to its denseness and uneven ground (McTiernan broke his wrist after a fall).

"Actual very, very heavy real jungle is cinematically not very interesting, because you can't see anything," he continues. "Your horizon ends at about four feet. We would wind up going through and cutting out leaves – not doing any damage – so that you could see through at some distance."

By far the biggest problem, though, was the Predator itself. The original script required it to be an evolution of the ultimate hunter, but it was a relatively small creature, built for speed and agility in order to make it into the perfect hunting machine. Jean-Claude Van Damme was hired to portray the creature, but soon left the project, claiming the suit made him hot and uncomfortable, and that it was difficult to move in. He was also unhappy with the fact that his face wouldn't be seen, as at the time he was still making his name in Hollywood, and didn't want to be hid away under layers of latex.

"We had to go off and start shooting the movie, and were late turning out the Predator," continues McTiernan. "We were all desperately anticipating it. Finally, the day it arrived they took the crowbars, pried it open and lifted it out of the box, and we all looked at each other and thought, 'Ohhh are we in trouble.' I [filmed some shots] of the damn thing and just sent it back to the studio, saying: 'You really don't want to continue with this, do you?' They looked at it and said no."

It was a wise decision, as the one-eyed bipedal dog-like creation looked silly rather than imposing. This last point was important to McTiernan, because he couldn't make a horror film (something *Predator* turns into after its gung-ho opening third) if the antagonist didn't look like it could be a suitable match for Schwarzenegger.

With production halted, McTiernan began looking for a suitable alternative. Stan Winston was drafted into work on a new monster, while Kevin Peter Hall was hired to play the Predator. The seven-foot two-inch actor had played monsters in numerous films, including *Without Warning*, *Mazes And Monsters* and *Monster In The Closet*, and had just finished filming *Harry And The Hendersons*, where he played Bigfoot. A full foot taller than Schwarzenegger, he towered over him in the newly designed suit, ensuring that even a trained veteran like Dutch wouldn't appear to be a match for the otherworldly beast.

"When we worked with Stan Winston it was wonderful," recalls McTiernan. "Stan had done this before, he knew how to go about it, and it was a very different experience with him." The Predator design he came up with was a world away from the crude, puppet-like creature that the studio originally had, and was instantly iconic thanks to its dreadlocked hair and hideous-looking mandibles. It was actually James Cameron who played a big part in the Predator's final design, as he commented on Winston's drawing as they were travelling together by plane saying that he'd always wanted to "see a creature with mandibles". Winston duly obliged, and had drawings ready for the meeting he was flying to.

> "WE DIDN'T START WORKING ON THE SEQUEL UNTIL AFTER THE COMIC-BOOK WAS A SUCCESS"
> JIM THOMAS

As filming resumed, McTiernan's final issues were with the effects that would power *Predator*; specifically the camouflage the Predator used to blend into the surrounding jungle, and its signature heat vision. The camouflage situation was solved by dressing someone in a red body suit, getting them to move around the jungle and adding the mattes in post-production. The revolutionary heat spectrum effects proved to be a little trickier to pull off.

"When we first did the heat vision, they had a real heat vision machine from the folks in New York City," continues McTiernan. "It was an enormous thing with an umbilical cord six inches thick that we could get maybe four feet from the truck. It really would see something based on temperature, but there was this little tiny problem, which was their ambient temperature in Mexico was in

As *Predator* progresses, you can actually see Schwarzenegger get more gaunt in his face as a direct result of an illness he suffered on set.

the 90s. Consequently, people were the same temperature as the background, and they were perfectly camouflaged. In order to deal with that, the splendid folks in the special effects said, 'Well, that's no problem, we'll put ice water on the jungle and we'll have the actors stand next to a fire just before the shot', so they were literally doing that for about a week, and maybe one, maybe two shots. It was a nightmare, and it cost a fortune, so finally I went off to a video special effects house. They did commercials and things, and I sat down for about three hours – we had to do this in secret – behind the backs of the board of executives and producers."

The new effects worked, and McTiernan had his film. He'd faced numerous obstacles due to lack of communication, poor costumes and a sick leading man (during the famous log scene, Schwarzenegger was reportedly so ill that he had to be hooked up on IV drips), but the end result was unquestionably worth it. *Predator* was a cutting-edge movie that cleverly fused all-out action with some true moments of horror in a tropical sci-fi setting. Critics tore into it on its original release, calling on the flimsy plot and weak dialogue. Audiences disagreed, however, and the $18 million movie went on to make over $98 million at the box office. A sequel was assured, but as John and Jim Thomas prepared the script, they found it going through numerous rewrites due to the loss of their leading man.

"Dillllllonnnnnn"

Predator had already proven that it had life off the silver screen thanks to a series of comics published by Dark House Comics in June 1989. Additional *Predator* lore was created by numerous writers, including Mark Verheiden and Chris Warner, but the original creators were keen to expand on their own theories for a wider audience.

"We didn't start working on the sequel until after the comic-book was a success, and Joel was the one who was able to convince the studio that we should do the sequel," revealed Jim Thomas on the *Predator 2* Blu-ray. "Our first efforts were to get a script, so we worked out a storyline where Arnold would reprise his role. But when it fell out, we had to reinvent the idea of the Predator coming down and having nothing to do with the original cast, just that he liked to hunt and had been coming here for a long time."

The loss of Schwarzenegger, who had no interest in relocating the series, was a huge blow. He instead decided to sign on to another sequel, *Terminator 2*, and his character was rewritten for Gary Busey in the form of Special Agent Peter Keyes, a DEA agent tasked with capturing the Predator.

McTiernan was also off the project, and directing duties fell to Stephen Hopkins, who was previously known for the rather lamentable *A Nightmare On Elm Street 5: The Dream Child*. Danny Glover, hot off the success of the *Lethal Weapon* series, was

cast in the lead role of Lieutenant Michael Harrigan, and was ably supported by the likes of Rubén Blades, Maria Conchita Alonso and Bill Paxton.

The Thomas brothers' original script saw a second Predator return to the crater left at the end of the original film, discovering what was left of the original Predator. After viewing video footage, it targeted Dutch and headed to his home town for revenge. It's admittedly a rather silly plot, and with the absence of Schwarzenegger it had to be rewritten. The rewrite was set in the not-too-distant future, and had Glover's Harrigan facing off against numerous drug gangs and a Predator, who, attracted by the rising heat (*Predator 2* was also a metaphor for global warming) began to pick off gang leaders as well as Harrigan's team.

20th Century Fox had big plans for the sequel, giving Hopkins a budget of $35 million; almost double the $18 million of *Predator*. The end result was disappointing, however, and while *Predator 2* is not as terrible as many state – a number of genuinely decent set pieces make it worthy of your time – it fails to capitalise on its interesting setting.

While Predator 2 may not have gripped audiences in the same way as the original (it would go on to amass just $57 million), one key scene – in which Harrigan discovers the Predator's spaceship and sees a trophy cabinet with a Xenomorph skull – provided Fox with a whole new direction to move the franchise in, even though the addition of the skull from Ridley Scott's classic had appeared by simple accident.

"It gave birth to the *Alien Vs Predator comic*," reveals Jim Thomas in the same *Predator 2* commentary. "They're from two completely different time periods; Aliens are far in the future, while this is barely in the future, and it was something that we just dreamed up while we were standing around on the set seeing the trophy case and saying, 'You know? We ought to see an Alien skull in there.' Since Fox owned it, it was pretty easy to do."

The inclusion of the Xenomorph's skull as an Easter egg and the subsequent promise of a crossover film where the two iconic movie monsters battled it out may have happened relatively easily, but the execution of actually putting such a movie together was far more difficult to pull off. It would be a further 14 years before the sci-fi marriage actually happened, and the end result wasn't what many fans were hoping for.

Many derided Paul WS Anderson's take on the series, but his vision should be given credit, even if the end product wasn't as good as the comics it had been based on. He did, after all, spend eight long years working on his vision before pitching it to Fox. The original comic-book story had been based on the planet Ryushi, a recently colonised planet that just so happens to be a hunting ground for Predators. A captive alien Queen is used to populate the planet, and the aliens soon start to attack the humans. Once the Predators arrive on the planet, they discover the settlers and change their plans. It's an interesting story that features excellent dynamics between the humans and Predators, but although it was turned into a script by Peter Briggs, it was never used, with Anderson instead using a story that took place on modern day Earth.

Charles Bishop Weyland (Lance Henriksen) organises an exploration party after discovering a strange heat source in the Antarctica. They soon discover a strange underground Pyramid, and eventually realise that Predators have been visiting

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: **Shane Black** (Rick Hawkins) **Sonny Landham** (Billy Sole) **Arnold Schwarzenegger** (Major Alan 'Dutch' Schaefer) **Richard Chaves** (Jorge 'Poncho' Ramirez) **Carl Weathers** (George Dillon) **Bill Duke** (Mac Eliot) **and Jesse Ventura** (Blain Cooper)

ANATOMY OF A KILLING MACHINE

Your essential guide to the ultimate big game hunter

Wrist Blades
These retractable blades are either two or three-pronged, and can be anything from 12 to18 inches in length. Forged from an unknown alloy, they are virtually impervious to harm and cut effortlessly through bone.

Body Mesh
The primary function of the Predator's body mesh is to allow cloaking for any parts of the body that aren't armoured. It is also used to provide electric-generated warmth while the Predator is hunting.

Armour
This ceramic-plated armour is extremely durable, with some strains being able to withstand even alien blood. While supple enough to ensure it doesn't hamper a Predator's movement, it can also withstand immense pressure. Ceremonial armour is typically reserved for Predator leaders.

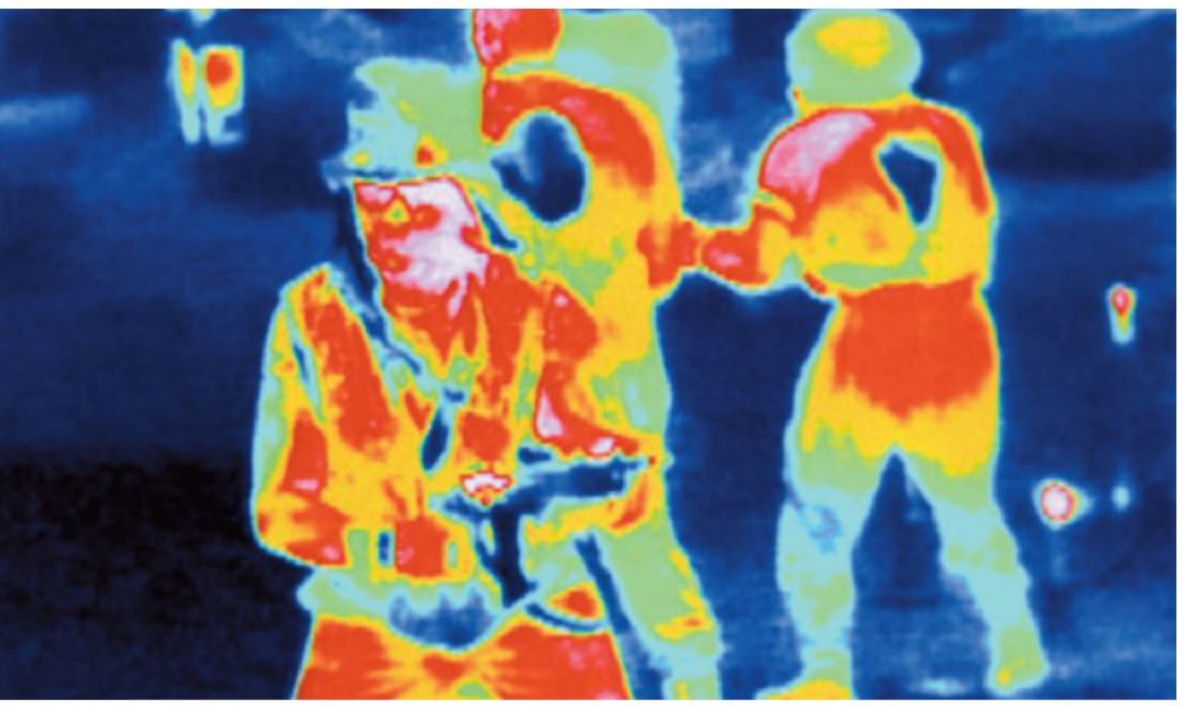
Camouflage
A Predator's biggest asset is the Yautja camouflage that it uses. Light is bent around the Predator, making it virtually invisible to the human eye, especially when not moving. It doesn't enable true invisibility, however, with a moving Predator being seen to shimmer. It's nevertheless extremely effective.

Shoulder-Mounted Plasma Cannon
This dangerous weapon is mounted on the Predator's shoulder, and is controlled by a targeting system found in the Predator's helmet. It's capable of firing plasma charges of various power, with enough strength to take down a ship if needed.

Bio Helmet
The Predator's helmet is extremely useful and incredibly versatile. It allows the Predator to breathe properly through a built-in respirator, and breathe while underwater. It contains built-in tracking for shoulder-mounted cannons, and features a special decoding device which can also record and play back any languages the alien encounters.

Medikit/Medicomp
Found on the Predator's wrist, this device has a variety of uses. In addition to doubling up as a portable medical centre, it also allows the Predator to detonate a small nuclear device if defeated.

Skulls
Predators love collecting trophies, and like to adorn themselves with their kills. They'll typically skin things and leave them hanging for others to find, or rip the skulls from bodies, often leaving the spinal cord still attached.



The original special effects were created by R/Greenberg Associates.

"WE WERE STANDING AROUND ON THE SET SEEING THE TROPHY CASE AND SAYING, 'YOU KNOW? WE OUGHT TO SEE AN ALIEN SKULL IN THERE'" JIM THOMAS

Earth for thousands of years, using willing human hosts to incubate Xenomorphs that the Predators could then hunt. Despite featuring a few memorable scenes, including a joint battle between a long-surviving Predator, his female companion (one of the few nods towards the original comic series) and an Alien Queen, the end result is rather messy, content to simply recreate its own mythology in order to deliver cheap popcorn thrills.

Despite being an obvious labour of love for Anderson, it failed to capture the excitement of the original comic series, while its final money shot, a Predalien bursting forth from a Predator's ribcage, was more silly than epic. It didn't matter to audiences, though, and while the film was critically panned, it nevertheless managed to gross over $172 million off a $60 million budget.

Due to its popularity, *Alien Vs Predator* received a sequel in 2007, which followed on directly from the first film. In the follow-up, the fully grown Predalien attacks the Predators, causing their ship to crash in a remote Colorado forest. The Predalien and a handful of Facehuggers escape and begin infecting the small and remote town of Gunnison,

CROSSOVER HELL

Thought Aliens just fought Predators? Think again, as we look at some of the best and worst comic-book crossovers to feature the iconic hunter

Mindhunter

Released: November 2000

A surprisingly good crossover, *The Darkness*' Jackie Estacado teams up with *Witchblade*'s Sara Pezzini after they find themselves imprisoned on a prison ship that's teeming with Aliens and Predators.

Aliens Versus Predator Versus The Terminator

Released: April 2000

All crossovers have an element of silliness, but this offering from writer Mark Schultz is gloriously over-the-top, and all the better for it. After getting defeated by John Connor in 2032, Skynet goes into hiding. Centuries later it begins creating Terminator/Alien hybrids, and the only person who can beat them is the clone of Ellen Ripley and Annalee Call.

Superman And Batman Versus Aliens And Predator

Released: January 2007

Another crossover from Schultz, but this offering feels too po-faced, as if DC were unwilling to let their superheroes look bad. It's another barmy plot featuring an older strain of Predators and Aliens reduced to being mindless pets. Highlights/lowlights include Superman being mistaken for a sun god, and Batman befriending the Predators.

Predator Versus Judge Dread

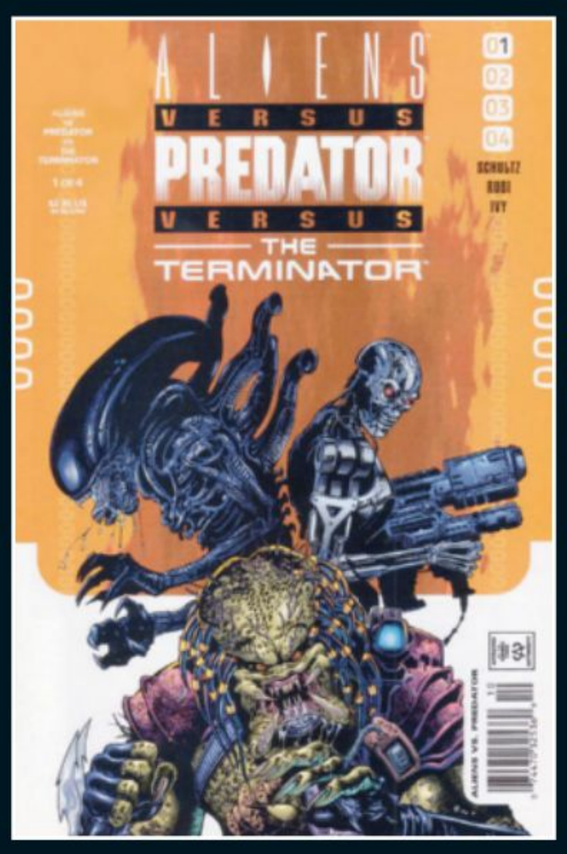
Released: October 1997

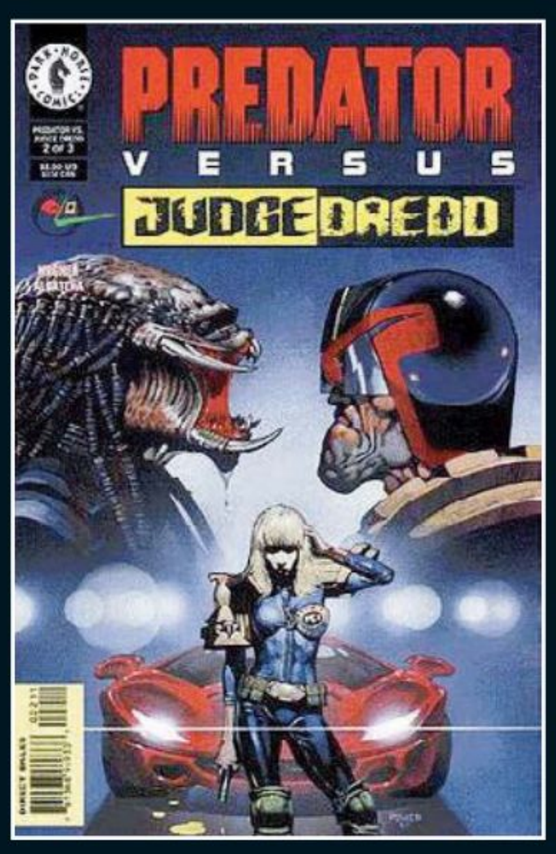
Judge Dredd creator John Wagner's interesting crossover ties in with the original *Predator* comic, as Judge Dredd's ally Psi-Judge Schaefer is a descendent of Detective Schaefer (the brother of Schwarzenegger's character). Predators visit Mega-City 1 and start hunting the law-keeping Judges, leaving Dredd with no choice but to take them down. It's a great story, further elevated by stunning imagery and lots of violence. It's arguably one of the best available crossovers, and worth a read regardless of whether you're a fan.

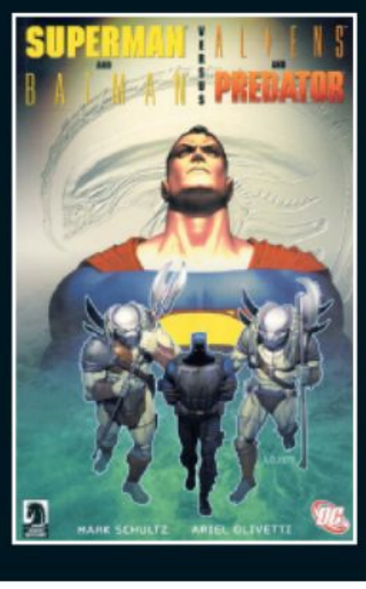
Tarzan Versus Predator: At The Earth's Core

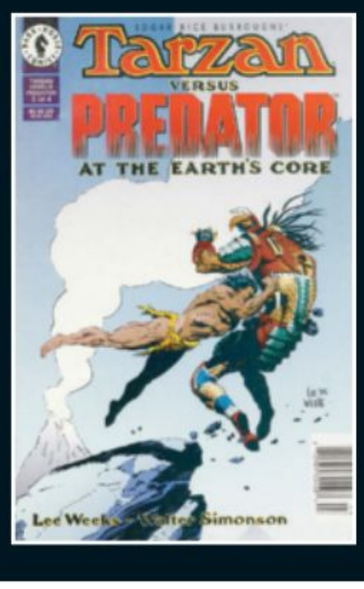
Released: January 1996

This sounds ridiculous, but the end result is well worth tracking down. Written by Walter Simonson, it sees Predators visiting Pellucidar, the last remaining primeval forest. Unfortunately, it's guarded by Tarzan, who doesn't take kindly to his friends being hunted. It's a gripping tale, which proves that Tarzan is a match for his technologically advanced foes.









IF IT BLEEDS WE CAN KILL IT

The best moments of the Predator film franchise

Bye bye Billy

Film: *Predator*

After declaring that "there's something out there, and it ain't no man," tracker Billy makes a final defiant stand so that Dutch and what's left of his team can hopefully escape from the pursuing Predator. Standing alone on a massive log, he pulls off his top and slowly cuts his body with his huge machete. It's a wonderfully iconic scene that was copied (to less impressive effect) in *Predators*. It's all for nothing, though, as moments after leaving him, Dutch hears Billy let out a blood-curdling scream. A little later the Predator rips Billy's spine out, claiming yet another of his coveted trophies.

A real classic

Film: *Predators*

As the group start exploring the area, they stumble upon a dead Predator (a version of the classic Predator from the original movie). As soon as Nikolai (Oleg Taktarov) begins to approach it, it's clear it's not really dead, but the response from it and the resulting attack is still terrifying.

Blain Bites it

Film: *Predator*

Blain may well be a mountain of a man, carrying a modified minigun (which he calls Ol' Painless), but even he's no match for the hunting Predator. The tobacco-chewing sexual Tyrannosaurus is spooked by some rustling in the bushes, only to come face-to-face with a cute little critter. Smiling at his foolishness, he's shot by the Predator. As surprise registers on his face, a second plasma shot sends the big man to his knees as his chest explodes in spectacular fashion.

Freefall

Film: *Predators*

Due to its reliance on paying homage to scenes from the original, there aren't too many truly classic moments in *Predators*. Its opening scene is a real doozy, however, starting off with mercenary Royce (Adrien Brody) waking up in a totally disorientated state. It's not long before he and the viewer realises that he's plummeting through the air at a tremendous rate. After a few tense seconds he manages to launch his parachute and land, only to discover that he's not the only one to be in the same predicament.

Final showdown

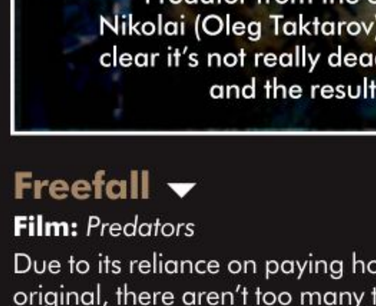
Film: *Predator*

After seeing his men picked off one by one, Dutch wants revenge. Smearing himself in mud to avoid the Predator's heat-seeking gaze, he sets to work making traps. He then sets a fire to attract the beast's attention, its light highlighting the invisible alien. With the Predator's camouflage suit malfunctioning, and after taking numerous wounds, the Predator removes its helmet, leaving Dutch to utter the franchise's most iconic line: "You're one ugly motherfucker."

Freezer Geezer

Film: *Predator 2*

Towards the end of *Predator 2*, the Predator is tracked down to a meat locker. Special Agent Peter Keyes (Gary Busey) leads a task force in the hope of avoiding the Predator's infrared gaze. As Harrigan watches alongside Agent Garber (Adam Baldwin) on a monitor, the Predator systematically dispatches them one by one while a panicked Garber is unable to help. Harrigan rushes off to rescue the team, but can't stop Keyes being cut in half by a flying disc.



Drugs are bad

Film: *Predator 2*

A Colombian drug lord gets killed by his Jamaican rivals after they burst into his penthouse apartment. It's not long, though, before they're attacked by the Predator. In addition to being well-choreographed, it's also an opportunity to show off the Predator's new gear, with telescopic poles, flesh-searing nets and a deadly throwing disc allow the hunter to effortlessly hunt down his prey.

Guerrilla attack

Film: *Predator*

Predator has some fantastic action scenes, with the assault on a group of guerrillas being particularly memorable. Bursting into the camp, they go to town, easily dispatching their foes and showing off McTiernan's eye for action. It's a thrilling scene, but neatly highlights the fact that, despite all their strength, Dutch's men are no match for the Predator.

Trophy Collector

Film: *Predator 2*

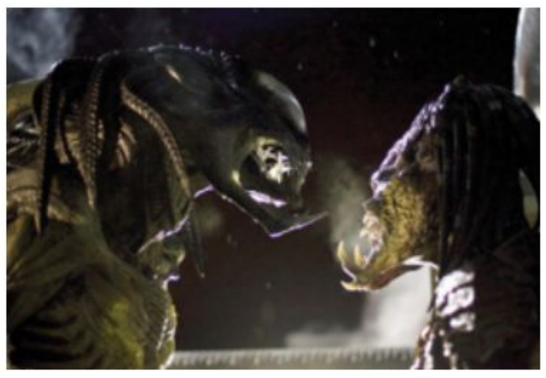
As Lieutenant Michael Harrigan cautiously explores the Predator's spacecraft, he stumbles on a room filled with trophies. It's an interesting menagerie, made all the more exciting by the inclusion of a Xenomorph skull. It's a pity, then, that it would be 14 years before a Predator shared screen time with an Alien, and that the final film was nowhere near as good as what one iconic moment promised.

Queen vs hunter

Film: *Alien Vs Predator*

Ever since fans saw an alien's skull in *Predator 2*, they excitedly awaited a proper onscreen scrap between the two iconic monsters. 14 years later their patience was rewarded, with Alexa Woods (Sanaa Lathan) and a lone Predator facing off against an alien Queen, with the Predator and human ultimately ending up victorious.

Numerous new species were introduced in *Predators*. These included the Tracker Predator, Falconer Predator and the featured Berserker Predator. The classic Predator design from the original film is seen chained up.



"WE MADE A POINT OF TRYING TO STAY TRUE TO THE ORIGINAL, WHICH WAS A REAL JUNGLE, REAL ACTORS, AND A REAL GUY IN A SUIT" NIMRÓD ANTAL

while its beleaguered group of cut-out caricatures try their level best to escape.

Like *Predator 2*, *Aliens Vs Predators: Requiem* promised much, but ultimately failed to deliver. There are plenty of nice ideas (pregnant women being used as living incubators, the army getting called in to try and stem the alien onslaught), but the execution throughout is rather limp. Directors Colin and Greg Strause may have been adept at creating gobsmacking effects (they were behind the iceberg effects in *Titanic*), but they weren't so hot when it came to dealing with characters and plot. The sequel was another success for Fox, though, and while it didn't make as much money as *Alien Vs Predator*, its eventual $128 million tally was still three times its $40 million budget.

Despite the obvious public interest in the crossover, no sequels have been announced, and fans of the series have had to make do with the rather lacklustre videogame released by Rebellion in 2010. *Predator* remained a hot property as a franchise, though, and in 2010 a third film was released, 20 years after *Predator 2*.

Robert Rodriguez had always been a huge fan of *Predator*, having written his first *Predators* script back in 1994. He'd also met Schwarzenegger about the sequel, who was adamant that the series "had to go back to the jungle". Rodriguez wasn't interested in simply revisiting the original, however, and made plans for the film to be set on the Predators' home world. He also paid no attention to the budget, as he had simply been hired to write a script.

"I wrote this script, and it was crazy," he reveals on the *Predators* DVD. "There was tonnes of stuff going on, and it was like a $200 million movie, but because I wasn't directing it I didn't have to worry. I knew they'd figure it out and cut out what they didn't want."

Rodriguez's guess was incorrect, however, and the project stalled. Filming eventually started in 2009 with a script that remained fairly faithful to Rodriguez's original idea. Made under Rodriguez's own Troublemaker Studios, *Predators* immediately began to generate interest, particularly once its cast was revealed: Adrien Brody (Royce) Topher Grace (Edwin) Alice Braga (Isabelle) and Walter Goggins (Stans) provided suitable indie credentials, Laurence Fishburne (Noland) added further clout, and Danny Trejo was hot off the back of Rodriguez's *Machete*.

Unfortunately, while the cast is strong, they're largely miscast, with Brody's gravel-throated mercenary being particularly amusing. Interestingly, Rodriguez decided against directing, leaving helming duties to Nimród Antal, who had first caught Rodriguez's attention with his 2003 comedy-thriller *Kontroll*.

"We made a very strong point of trying to stay true to the original film, which was a real jungle, real actors, and a real guy in a suit," revealed Antal in the DVD commentary. "We tried to stay true to that and be faithful to that." The end result was a little too faithful to *Predator*, and while many scenes and sequences directly mimic those from the original, they never have the same impact, making *Predators* often feel like a weak, trashy reboot. This is a shame, as the premise is a sound one.

We've not seen the last of the Thomas brothers' fearsome creation, though, as *Predators* did big business, with the $40 million budgeted film generating over $127 million. Whether future films ever match the one-off blend of genres that McTiernan's original managed remains to be seen, but as long as Fox continues to make movies based on the iconic monster, we're certain audiences will be around to watch them.

DIGITAL PREDATORS

There have been over 20 videogames featuring the iconic hunter. Here's a few

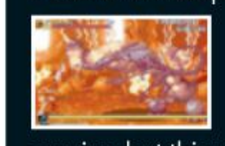
Predator

Year Released: 1987
Publisher: Activision

Everything about the first *Predator* videogame was woeful. The visuals were lousy, and the gameplay bland. The only saving grace was when the screen turned infrared, and you had to avoid the Predator's crosshairs.

Alien Vs Predator

Year Released: 1994
Publisher: Capcom



The film spin-offs may have failed to live up to the comics, but this was a different proposition entirely. Capcom created a magnificent scrolling fighter that combined fast-paced action with beautifully animated sprites.

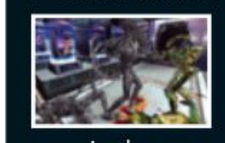
Alien Vs Predator

Year Released: 1994
Publisher: Atari Corporation

Alien Vs Predator was a technically incredible – for the time at least – first-person shooter that let you play as each of the three main races. It led to Rebellion making many more games based on the franchise.

Aliens Vs Predator

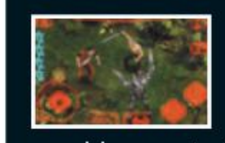
Year Released: 1999
Publisher: Fox Interactive



Excellent visuals, clever level design and a genuinely creepy atmosphere combine to create the best *AVP* game that Rebellion has created. It was re-released on Steam in 2010 to celebrate the release of another *AVP* game.

Predators

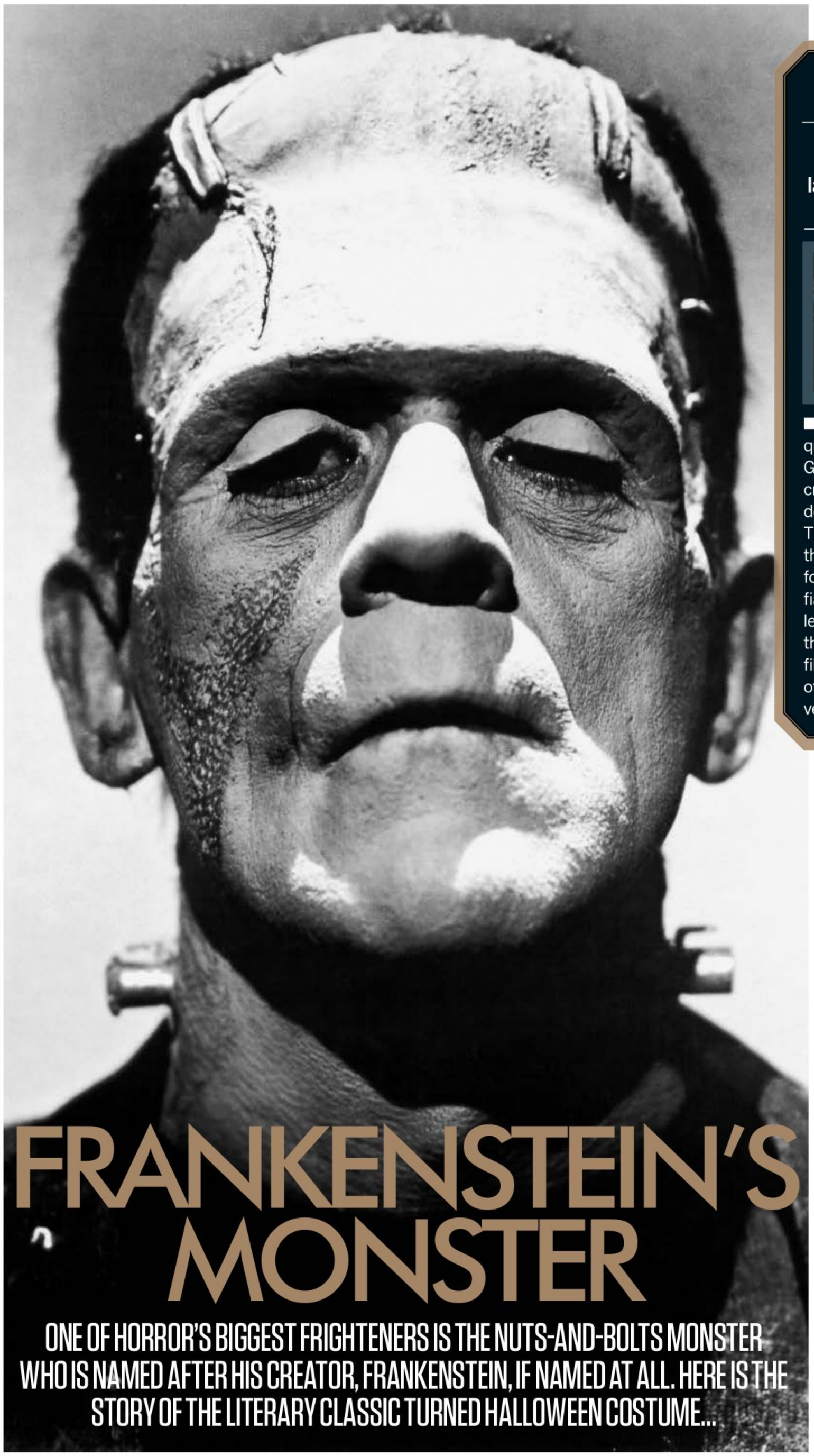
Year Released: 2010
Publisher: Chillingo



This iOS effort is fairly easy to understand, requiring you to take down wave after wave of human prey. The controls are adequate despite the touchscreen interface, so fans of the series will be pleased.

For more classic videogames, see the latest issue of

retro GAMER



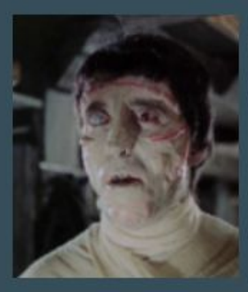
FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

ONE OF HORROR'S BIGGEST FRIGHTENERS IS THE NUTS-AND-BOLTS MONSTER WHO IS NAMED AFTER HIS CREATOR, FRANKENSTEIN, IF NAMED AT ALL. HERE IS THE STORY OF THE LITERARY CLASSIC TURNED HALLOWEEN COSTUME...

13

FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

Mary Shelley's cautionary tale took shambling form with Boris Karloff and later Christopher Lee, and has remained a foundation stone of sci-fi



SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★☆☆☆
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★☆☆
INTELLIGENCE: ★☆☆☆☆

■ VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN'S monster is the quintessential example of the mad scientist playing God, with grave consequences. The eight foot tall creature made from the body parts of the exhumed dead is so hideous that Frankenstein abandons him. The monster is responsible for the death of a child, the framing and hanging of a woman held responsible for that crime as well as the murder of Frankenstein's fiancée Elizabeth yet he is a tragic figure. His rage is learned, rather than innate and Boris Karloff captured the character's sadness beautifully in the 1931 horror film *Frankenstein* – easily the most recognisable face of Frankenstein's monster. Over 80 years later and the very name is shorthand for science run amok.

It was a storm-savaged night in November when lightning struck and Frankenstein's monster was declared 'Alive!' Author Mary Shelley (then Godwin) recalled that evening in 1816 when she conceived what would become one of the first pieces of science fiction and an icon of horror. "I saw – with shut eyes, but acute mental vision – I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together," she wrote in a later reprint of the novel (the first didn't even bear her name). "I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion."

It was during the Year Without A Summer that 18-year-old Godwin and her future husband Percy Bysshe Shelley spent a holiday at Lord Byron's Swiss villa. It was there that Byron declared that they would each write a ghost story. Shelley admitted that she struggled, "I felt that blank incapability of invention which is the greatest misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations," she wrote, while endeavoring to answer the persistent question of how a young girl could cook up such a hideous plot. "Have you thought of a story? I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative," she said.

Her tale of a scientist playing Creator was sparked while listening to a conversation between Shelley and Byron about galvanism, where electricity

"I SAW THE HIDEOUS PHANTASM OF A MAN STRETCHED OUT… AND STIR WITH AN UNEASY, HALF VITAL MOTION" MARY SHELLEY

Along with Dracula, Frankenstein's monster has become one of the most prominent horror icons.

is used to stimulate human nerves and muscles. Retiring to bed long after the witching hour, Shelley was preoccupied with the frightening prospect of philosophers, namely Erasmus Darwin, drawing close to animating the dead; a real life Victor Frankenstein. And so one of horror's most iconic monsters was born, and so too, incidentally, the beginnings of the vampire we recognise today. Another of the stories scribed that same holiday, *The Vampyre* by Byron's physician John Polidori, transformed the stalker of folklore legend into an aristocratic bloodsucker, preying on the necks of high society. Of course, it was Bram Stoker who created the legend of *Dracula* in 1897.

Frankenstein and Dracula would become two of the most influential figures in horror, their images quaffed and carved into our sub-consciousness by Universal Pictures. The major movie studio started out in the Thirties with a wanted list of villains that had all broken free of their copyright binding shackles. Frankenstein and his monster, like Dracula, were free to star in the countless film adaptations that followed after proving a success for Universal. The fact that the story was known at all was thanks to the dozens of stage adaptations manifesting in the 1840s, latching onto the tragic story of a creature both feared and pitied. It was Peggy Webling's production of the novel that prompted Universal to purchase the film rights to an adaptation of this retelling, which was notable for being the first to name the monster after its creator, Frankenstein.

The subsequent 1931 movie, simply titled *Frankenstein* and starring the iconic Boris Karloff, presented the green, groaning, flat-headed and bolt-necked monster that we see every 31 October. In the novel, Shelley's creature was articulate, self-taught in the ways of the English language through reading classic literature while in hiding. He is also described on paper as having long hair, no bolts at his throat, and cursed with a decaying, yellowish skin that fails to mask the borrowed muscles and vessels underneath. By 1942, the monster was given another outing that cemented his most commonly recalled depiction, with Bela Lugosi, made famous by his Dracula performance, starring as the creature in *Frankenstein Meets The Wolf Man*. It serves as yet another explanation for the name confusion that's plagued generations, and it's also the reason for his stereotypical stiff-legged way of walking, arms outstretched. In the movie he was blinded, but all references to this were cut from the final version, making Lugosi look inexplicably odd, especially since references to the monster's sight being restored were also cut.

From then on, Frankenstein's monster was frequently used as an ensemble character, pitted against other horror legends, and even the likes of comedy duo Abbott and Costello, until Hammer Horror took the reins. The British powerhouse

STARRING… FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

THE TOP 5 ROLES FEATURING FRANKENSTEIN'S CREATION

The Munsters
Herman Munster, head of the Munster family of Mockingbird Lane, was a typical Frankenstein's monster, but with a warped, working-class American view of himself. His family was made up of the classic monsters from Universal Studios, and copyright wasn't an issue thanks to Universal producing the show.

The Addams Family
This unit of eccentrics started life as a satirical cartoon of the ideal American family. Lurch was the servant who, while having the bodies of many families, had the heart of an Addams. He was gifted at playing the organ, and in the sitcom he had a speaking role, although this was usually a brief "You rang?"

The X-Files
The Season Five episode, 'The Post-Modern Prometheus', was famously filmed in black and white in the style of old Frankenstein movies. Mulder and Scully investigated a monster nicknamed the Great Mutato, the creation of a Frankenstein-like doctor, who is looking for a mate…

Buffy The Vampire Slayer
Buffy borrowed the Frankenstein story twice, first in 'Some Assembly Required', where a teen raised his brother from the dead and tried to build him a girlfriend. In Season Four, a mad scientist built a man, but with a twist – he was fashioned out of demon parts as well as human.

Doctor Who
'The Brain Of Morbius' is a Fourth Doctor adventure where a mad scientist (the only kind) is building a body from spare parts to bring back to life the evil Time Lord Morbius, and remarks that Tom Baker's Doctor has a "magnificent head." As Sarah Jane finds out, this is the one part the patchwork alien is missing.

UNIVERSAL HORROR VS HAMMER HORROR

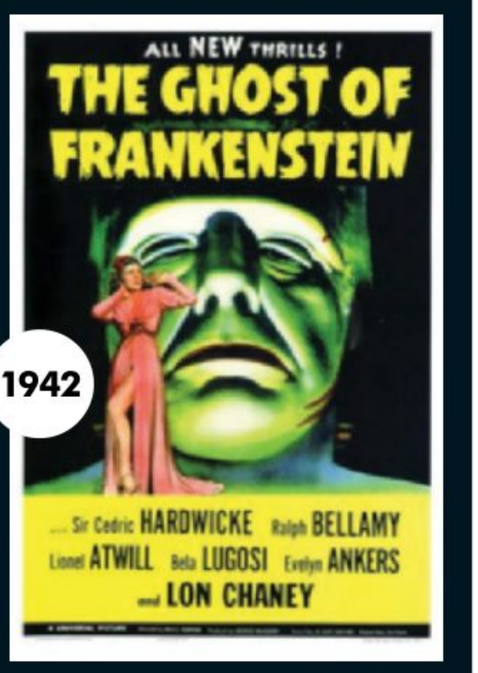
A HISTORY IN PICTURES OF FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER ON THE BIG SCREEN

1931

1935

1957

1939



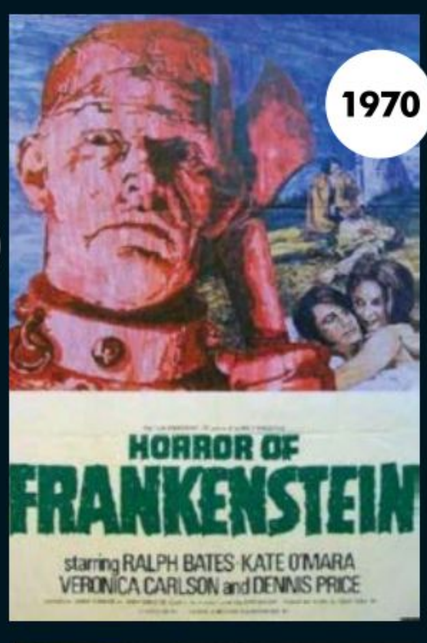
1942

1958

1964

1943

1967



1970

1944

1948

1969

1974

Frankenstein's monster appeared frequently on-screen under the Universal and Hammer banners.

dominated the horror movie market in the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies with their camp, bloody, and big-breasted productions that frequently crumpled the faces of the British Board of Film Censors in distaste. Peter Cushing often played the role of Dr Frankenstein, stealing the focus from the monster for a change. It started with *The Curse Of Frankenstein*, featuring Christopher Lee as the unholy creation, and was the first of Hammer's backlog to be splattered with bright red blood rather than monochrome liquid. It was a huge success, in the process sparking a series of loosely connected sequels.

The monster was now undoubtedly thriving in pop culture, outliving his original creator who, over the years, has come under dispute as to whether she actually wrote the novel in the first place. After all, a woman imbued with the fragile sensibilities of that time could never conjure up something so unsightly, surely? Writer Germaine Greer swats this argument by declaring in *The Guardian*, "The logic goes something like this: Frankenstein is a masterpiece; masterpieces are not written by self-educated girls, and therefore *Frankenstein* cannot have been written by Mary Shelley. If *Frankenstein* is not a masterpiece, the thesis collapses." Greer argues that it's not actually a novel worthy of the attention it's received, let alone the "50 (mostly bad) films" it has inspired. The story of a man who created a monster that is as human as him, but driven to depraved deeds as a result of the way humanity has mistreated him, is also a mark of its authorship, says Greer. "Throughout the novel he remains incapable of confronting the task of killing the creature he made, or even realising it is his duty to do so," she comments. "He is more like the mother of a monstrous child than the maker of a fake human."

Lurch in *The Addams Family*, Herman Munster, DC Comics – Frankenstein's monster has appeared in many guises, and his story retold by many voices. The novel itself has taken a vice-like grip over Shelley's legacy, and is cursed to haunt students the world over as a compulsory literary study. It is the first novel that uses science to create a monster, a modern take on the age-old fable that man shouldn't mess with the gods; take Adam and Eve or Prometheus, for example. The full title of *Frankenstein* actually is *The Modern Prometheus*, after all. It calls into question the thirst for human knowledge and the fear of where it could lead, and on top of that, it makes a fantastic Halloween costume.

"FRANKENSTEIN CALLS INTO QUESTION THE THIRST FOR HUMAN KNOWLEDGE AND THE FEAR OF WHERE IT COULD LEAD"

REOPENING THE X-FILES

MODERN SCI-FI OWES A LOT TO THE X-FILES. RUNNING FOR NINE SERIES AND 202 EPISODES (WITH ANOTHER ON THE WAY), AS WELL AS TWO FILMS, IT HAS INFORMED OUR INTRIGUE FOR THE UNEXPLAINED, AND GIVEN US ONE OF TV'S MOST ICONIC COUPLINGS. WE SPEAK TO THE CREATIVE MINDS BEHIND THE NINETIES TV PHENOMENON...

THE X-FILES MOVIES are available on limited edition Blu-ray from 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment priced £16.57.

The show achieved a lot within a relatively low budget.

Nearly 40 years ago, Las Vegas reporter Carl Kolchak battled a vicious vampire in the television movie *The Night Stalker*. Recalling how it both terrified and fascinated him as an adolescent, Chris Carter decided to do the same for television audiences of the Nineties. "I was scared out of my wits by that show", reflects Carter, "and I realised that there just wasn't anything scary on television anymore."

Another profound influence was the classic Sixties' series *The Avengers*, particularly the episodes starring Patrick Macnee and Diana Rigg. "I loved that show", says Carter. "I loved that relationship between Steed and Emma Peel; the intensity of the stories. It's the way I sort of instinctively write, so that also fed in to my ultimate concept."

The result of this childhood nostalgia was *The X-Files*, the pop culture phenomenon of the time that followed two FBI agents specialising in the paranormal. Spawning two feature films, the series' influence can be felt to this day, reflected most recently in Syfy's *Warehouse 13* (deemed by some as 'X-Files Lite') and of course, *Fringe*.

"With all of the paranormal events that are reported in the world", Carter offers in explanation of what he was trying to do with the show, "I have to believe that there is an agency like the FBI, or a branch, that investigates these things. They won't admit to it, but there is a government department investigating these very high-profile cases. I believe that there are people devoted solely to these kinds of cases."

Whether or not such a department actually exists in real life, the FBI context and the authenticity of the agents' routines and techniques removed the show from the standard entries in the fantasy/sci-fi/horror genres. The show's co-executive producer Glen Morgan offers "The FBI aspect grounds the series in reality. We get letters from people who want to know who to call to see the real *X-Files*."

James Wong, Morgan's co-writer at the time and the series' co-executive producer, believes that making the lead characters FBI agents added a crime-solving element to the series, with this added element ultimately being beneficial to storytelling. "In some ways it's limiting", he admits. "But on the other hand, it gives some legitimacy to their investigations; it's not just some schmo out there poking around."

Whereas *The Night Stalker* (which became a short-lived TV series in 1974) pitted the intrepid Kolchak against waves of werewolves, zombies, mummies and vampires, Carter was determined to avoid standard horror fare. All the stories, he says, "must take place in the realm of extreme possibility. Although I was a big fan of *The Night Stalker*, I realised that its approach was self-limiting. There are only so many monsters you can offer before you run out of monster power. We tried to approach these stories from a more cerebral perspective. With vampirism, we would take a real scientific approach. I'm interested not just in mutants and monsters, but real scientific anomalies, biological anomalies, unexplained phenomena. Basically, we were interested in any kind of science of speculative technology story that looks at something that could somehow happen. We begin with the sort of age-old question, 'What if?' Then we spend a lot of time trying to make sure that the stories are sufficiently rooted in reality."

14

MULDER & SCULLY

The FBI's most famous duo, the sceptical Scully was assigned to work with Fox 'Spooky' Mulder on unsolved cases, reinventing TV in the process

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ MULDER AND SCULLY were a masterful pairing: the rational sceptic and the eager believer, thrown in amongst the bizarre and the unexplained. The two were given the dubious task of investigating the FBI's unsolved cases, known as the X-Files.

Dana was a trailblazer for strong women on television while Fox's dry cynical sense of humour and obsession with finding the truth made him compelling to watch.

The X-Files was one of the most influential series of the Nineties and its influence can be seen in countless shows such as *Lost*, *Fringe*, *Supernatural* and *Torchwood*. The two agents were so huge that they made it to Springfield for an episode of *The Simpsons* and even *Deep Space Nine* featured investigators Dulmer and Lucsly – anagrams of Mulder and Scully.

That challenge is certainly what attracted director/producer David Nutter – who since then has become one of the most in-demand pilot directors working in Hollywood – to the series. "The key to the drama is making everything as real as possible", Nutter says. "To do this, you really have to get the characters' emotions and the environment of the story just right. You also have to get into the hearts and minds of people, not only those who are putting the show together, but the people who are at home watching."

Supervising producer Howard Gordon, who would go on to work on *24* and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* amongst other things, believes the show gained a significant following in part because it tapped into the American public's pervasive cynicism about government. "It started with Watergate, and progressed to the present", he says. "People believe the government is hiding things from us. Those shadowy possibilities, which are present in every show, hold a certain appeal. Remember the button, 'Question Authority'? That and 'Trust No One' are adjuncts to 'The Truth is Out There.'"

He adds, "Part of the show's appeal – to borrow a phrase from *Clear And Present Danger* – is that the truth needs a soldier. And Agent Mulder (David Duchovny, currently of *Californication*) is that soldier. He's the guy who goes against the conventional wisdom, who fights his own government – his own agency – to get answers.

Fox Mulder's partner was Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson), and the two characters provided the show with its analytical and moral core. Mulder is the primary champion of the FBI's X-Files, obsessed with paranormal investigations since witnessing his sister's abduction by a UFO as a child (of course, no one believes the young Mulder). Scully, a doctor and forensics expert, is assigned to the X-Files to counter Mulder's sometimes overly enthusiastic acceptance of paranormal happenings. In broad terms, they represent the believer and the skeptic, and it is this dynamic that powered the series.

"Mulder and Scully represent equal and competing parts of my nature", says Carter on the dynamic the two provided. "I guess I'm a natural skeptic, so I have much of the Scully character in me. Yet I'm still willing to take leaps of faith, to go out on a limb. I love writing for both of those characters – both their voices are very clear in my head – and I want to show the two sides of the issue, the doubter and the believer."

Though the complex relationship between Mulder and Scully was essential to the success of *The X-Files*, it was the storylines that carried the show. No other series trafficked so subversively in the unexpected. And the unexpected in question would present its own difficulties on a weekly basis, making it engrossing, and indeed essential viewing.

"This is really a fabulous genre for me," says co-executive producer Bob Goodwin, who prior to being involved with *The X-Files* had been a producer on the abandoned *Star Trek Phase II* TV series, would go on to *Smallville*, and was the producer down in the trenches overseeing physical production of the show. "But what I came to learn very quickly is that *The X-Files* was probably the most difficult show to produce on television. Every single week was a whole new movie. It's not a traditional series like *NYPD Blue*, in which they have their squad room and station sets, and they spend five days out of eight with the same five actors and a few guest stars in the same places. We never repeated anything. Beyond Mulder's office and Scully's forensics lab, every episode was a whole new movie with a new cast. Every week, new

"IT STARTED WITH WATERGATE. PEOPLE BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT IS HIDING THINGS FROM US" HOWARD GORDON

Mulder represented the believer, while Scully was the sceptic.

"I'M A NATURAL SCEPTIC, SO I HAVE MUCH OF SCULLY IN ME"
CHRIS CARTER

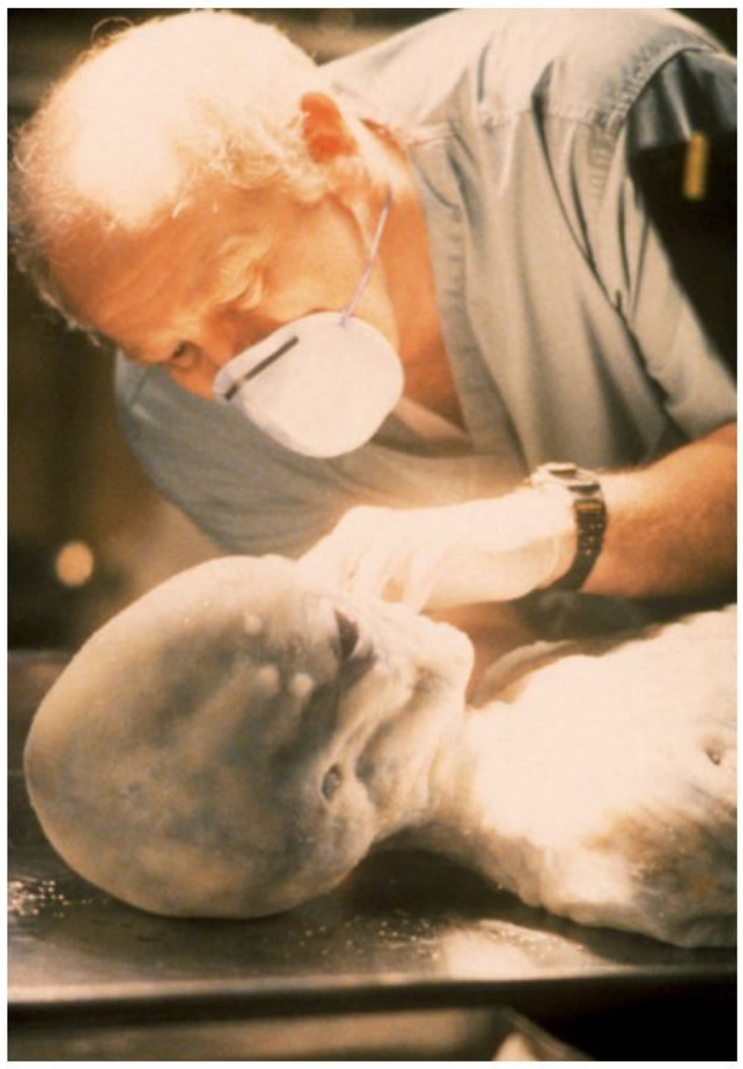
characters have to be created, new sets to be either found or built, and unbelievable kinds of special effects sequences had to be created."

Considering the show's budget was lower than a lot of other genre fare of the time, Goodwin is amazed that they were able to achieve all that they did. "I feel, with some pride, that what we were delivering was the best quality television you could get", he enthuses. "We didn't skimp, we just found a way to do what we wanted within our budget. The first year, I almost had a nervous collapse every time I got a new script. 'OK,' I would say to myself, 'here's a good one: this guy can relocate all the bones in his body and sliver through tiny air vents and suck people's livers out of their bodies. Great. How do we do that?' Every episode there was something that was really amazingly challenging to create. From great fires to worms wriggling under the skin of people."

Emmy winning director/producer Daniel Sackheim, who produced the pilot for *The X-Files* with Carter, and went on to work on shows like *House* and *Law & Order*, explains that stylistic influences on the show in its earliest development stage included the likes of documentary film *The Thin Blue Line* and the Helen Mirren series, *Prime Suspect*. "But the reality is that *The X-Files* sort of found its own style in that it didn't have a confined style to it", he points out. "Everybody who came on the show attempted to make a little scary movie. I think it's a testament to the uniqueness of the show, unlike something like a typical cop show which is more rigid in its format. *The X-Files'* style is distinctive and yet it is also fluid.

"I also think Chris was really smart in that he had a well-thought-out game plan", Sackheim continues. "He had a game plan going into the pilot, and he knew where he would be halfway through year one, at the end of year one, halfway through year two, the end of year two and the beginning of year three. He had a plan in his mind as to how it would develop and how the characters would develop. There was sort of an internal bible worked out. He said to me when we were doing the pilot, 'The reason most series fail is that nobody has a long view of where the show is going to go', and he felt that he did.

Each episode brought something new to the table.

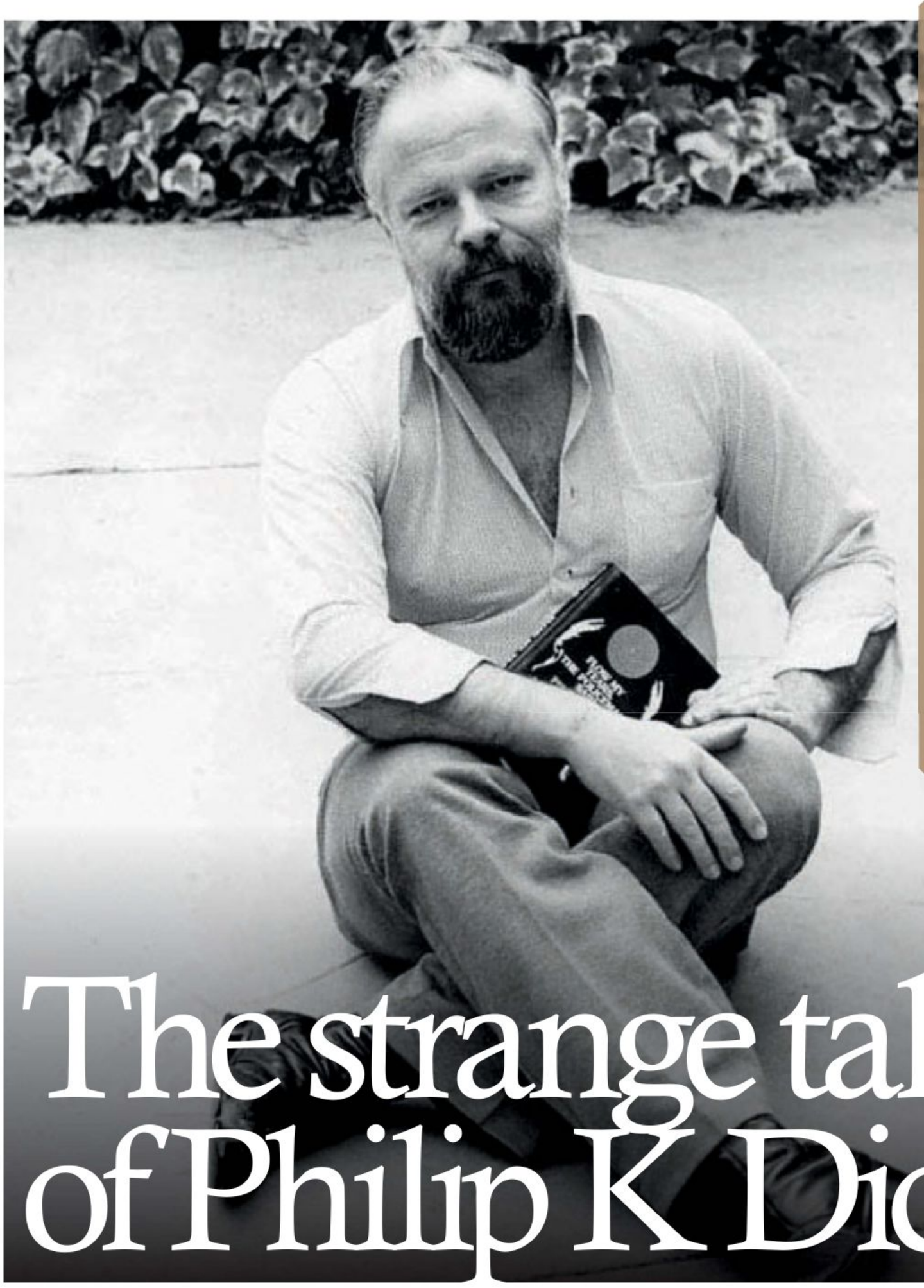


It's Carter's opinion that the show's success had as much to do with viewer fascination with UFOs as it did with the creativity of the show itself.

"The idea that there are visitors to the planet, that they are not only visiting now but have been visiting since prehistory, and how it affects us is a very interesting idea," he muses. "I suppose just looking up into the night sky at all those millions of stars up there, you wonder if it's possible. I have a pet theory that everyone wants to have that experience where they're driving through the desert at night, and they see something and can't explain what it is. I think it's all about religion. Not necessarily Christian religion, but it's about beliefs – and meaning and truth, and why are we here, and why are they here, and who's lying to us. It's religion with a lowercase 'r'. Encountering a UFO would be like witnessing a miracle."

The real miracle, of course, was that the network gave the green light at all. In today's era of television, there is a constant search for a genre show that will capture the attention of the mainstream audience, but at the time that wasn't the case. Sci-fi was still a four-letter word, and not many executives were looking for the next big genre hit, simply because there hadn't been one for quite a while.

In the end, of course, Carter was vindicated, something he graciously shares with the crew that brought the show to life every week. "People felt very invested in the show, and were proud to work on it", Carter notes. "My feeling is that most things fail in this business, and the powers that be always proceed as if what you're going to do is going to fail; they're always hedging. So we went boldly forward and showed them we knew what we were doing, what kind of stories we were telling, that we could tell them well. I think that boldness translated into a winning team. I'm sounding like a coach now, but in many ways it's like putting together a good team of people. And this team was the best you could hope for."



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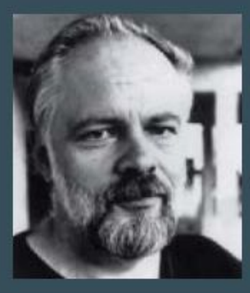
The strange tale of Philip K Dick

IT IS THE LOT OF THE SCI-FI WRITER TO STRUGGLE AGAINST THE STIGMA ATTACHED TO THEIR GENRE. BUT THE WORK OF PHILIP K DICK WENT FURTHER THAN ANYONE BEFORE IN PERMEATING MODERN, MAINSTREAM CULTURE. HIS QUESTIONING OF THAT WHICH IS SERVED TO US AS 'REALITY' SPEAKS TO THE CONTEMPORARY PSYCHE NOW MORE THAN EVER. BUT DICK'S RESTLESS GENIUS MASKED A LIFE OF STRUGGLE, ADDICTION AND, FINALLY, EPIPHANY

15

PHILIP K DICK

The award winning novelist has penned 44 published novels and over 120 short stories, with his back catalogue consisting almost entirely of works of science-fiction



SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★☆
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
CRITICAL ACCLAIM: ★★★★☆
WRITING SKILLS: ★★★★★
PRODUCTION SKILLS: ★★☆☆☆

■ NOT CONTENT with the world we live in, Dick once stated he preferred, 'to write a fictional world spun out of my own mind…because the world we actually have does not meet my standards.' And seemingly his worlds were a success, as many of his narratives have now been adapted into films, including *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall* – twice – *Minority Report* and *The Adjustment Bureau*. His works have also appeared on stage, a radio drama and comic strips. Dick's won numerous awards, was permitted onto the Sci-Fi Hall of Fame in 2005 and now has an annual prize named after him, recognising the year's best sci-fi paperback.

The writers and thinkers already profiled in this series share many common qualities, and chief among them is the respect and fame they achieved within their lifetimes. HG Wells was a friend to politicians and the cultural elite, Isaac Asimov became a recognisable television personality, while Arthur C Clarke's brief partnership with Stanley Kubrick elevated him to celebrity status. In each case, the exposure made them into popular property, removing the sense of mystery that can prove so compelling in a public figure. When even those who deride science fiction are familiar with the brightness of their talent, it somehow shines with less intensity.

We have long since passed the moment when knowing the work of Philip Kindred Dick required a deep understanding of literature, but the manner in which he lived his life speaks of that rarest of creatures: the sci-fi writer as artist. A man of extraordinary intelligence, Dick existed in relative poverty, writing novels of singular vision and style that never attracted the mainstream attention his peers insisted they deserved in his lifetime. He suffered through divorce, addiction and an increasingly fragile state of mind, before his premature death a few weeks before the premiere of *Blade Runner*, the film that would end up making him internationally famous.

Like so many of the generation of writers that came of age during World War II, Dick was attracted to sci-fi by the regular work available in pulp magazines like *Amazing*. His ambitions, however, reached far beyond the generic stories that paid his rent. "Science-fiction writers, I am sorry to say, really don't know anything," he wrote in his 1978 essay 'How To Build A Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later'. "Usually, our fiction is dreadful. A few years ago no college or university would consider inviting one of us to speak. We were mercifully confined to pulp magazines, impressing no one."

As technology raced ahead in the rush of modernity that greeted the end of the war, science-fiction literature struggled to keep up, slipping further and further into fantasy. "It's really as if the world caught up with sci-fi," he

Blade Runner **has had an unfathomable impact on sci-fi cinema. It's a shame Dick wasn't around to see it.**

"For Dick, reality was little more than a mass delusion that God had forced mankind to believe in"

told *Twilight Zone Magazine*. "The years went by and the disparity, the temporal gap, began to close. We are no longer writing about the future. That creates within sci-fi a completely fantastic type of novel, which is set on the planet Mordaria or Malefoozia in another galaxy, where they all have 18 heads, and 16 of them have a sexual act together – in other words, no connection with Earth."

This desire to fill his work with a deep-rooted connection with the people and world around him is vital to the appeal of Dick's work. At the time, sci-fi was all space travel and ray guns, but as a diligent student of philosophy, Dick "became educated to the fact that the greatest pain does not come zooming down from a distant planet, but from the depths of the heart."

As his career went on, Dick allowed his experiences in life to influence his work with increasing regularity. He had lived through this great pain, and he reached within his soul to share the knowledge it brought him with humanity. "He wanted to be a mainstream novelist," wrote *Time* magazine's Richard Corliss in 2004. "Writing sci-fi, he felt like a betrayer of his higher métier – like a whore, and one who was underpaid and underappreciated… Dick knew that his job was not to handicap the future, but to explain the present.

Dick's novels stand apart from the majority of science fiction in that the vast majority are based on Earth, and in the present or near-future. His characters are ostensibly normal, imperfect human beings, and he had little time for writing that isolated itself from its readers. "I'm with the little man. I wouldn't want to be with the superman characters for all the money in the world," Dick told *The Aquarian* in 1978. "The characters in Ayn Rand and Heinlein who have such contempt for everybody. One day the little man is going to rise up and punch the superman out, and I want to be there when it happens."

Rather than create a coherent reality from fantastical elements, Dick begins with reality and slowly peels away the layers to reveal a larger truth. The problems faced by his characters rarely involved alien intelligence or pan-galactic warfare, but instead focus on the way real people react to and deal with the circumstances they are presented with. "No matter what things may come, they will be exploited, merchandised and routinised by the force of human weakness," wrote *The New Yorker* of Dick's literature. "No matter how mad life gets, it will first of all be life."

The two questions that underscore all of Dick's work are: 'what is real?' and, 'what constitutes the authentic human being?' – a mix of philosophy and humanity that is unmatched anywhere in science fiction. In answering these questions, Dick didn't need to look any further than the world he saw outside his window or being fed directly to his television screen. He had become a radical in the Sixties and was embroiled in enough revolutionary activity to have his house broken into and receive a death threat from the Marin County police. Always a paranoid person, Dick became acutely aware of the way power can corrupt and the influence those wielding power have over the way we view the world. "We live in a society in which spurious realities are manufactured by the media, by governments, by big corporations, by religious groups, by political groups," he wrote in 1978. "I ask, in my writing, what is real?... I do not distrust their motives. I distrust their power. It is an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind. I should know. I do the same thing… Sometimes, when I see my 11-year-old daughter watching TV, I wonder what she is being taught."

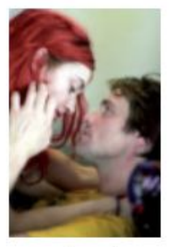
This concern over the media saturation of modern society would only become more relevant in the years after his death, and Hollywood soon caught on. Dick's writing may have been relegated to the ghetto of science fiction, but his preoccupation with the nature of reality, corporate power, and the threat that technology poses to traditional notions of humanity spoke directly to the modern zeitgeist. There is an irony to the fact that the work of science-fiction writers who spent so long imagining minutely detailed future societies dates so quickly, yet Dick, who struggled to keep his work anchored in the present, still seems so fresh and vital. Even now, reading Dick seems like so much more than escapism.

Dick once joked that you would have to kill him, fix his face in a smile and prop him up in the front seat of a convertible to get him to go to Hollywood. But his fear of how the anti-authoritarian paranoia of his fiction would be interpreted by the studios gave way to his financial worries and the desire to see his work reach a greater number of people. "It started to bother me, finally, when I finished *A Scanner Darkly*," he told the *Science Fiction Review*. "I had finally written a true masterpiece after 25 years of trying, and my agent wrote back when he read the first part and he said, 'You're absolutely right, this is exceptional material'. Then he went out and sold it for the same old $2,000… I fired my agent."

By the beginning of the Seventies, after decades of pumping out stories like a machine in order to keep up with his debts, Dick felt that his work was beginning to carry serious literary importance. "I am a ⇨

Total Recall

Five more texts to help understand Philip K Dick's turbulent life



Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind
Director: Michel Gondry
The plot, if not the tone, in Michel Gondry and Charlie Kaufman's masterpiece owes much to Dick's writing. The concept of a couple having their memories of each other erased is reminiscent of a number of his stories, while also expressing Dick's sense of humanity and dark sense of humour.

I Am Alive And You Are Dead: A Journey Into The Mind Of Philip K Dick
Author: Emmanuel Carrere
This unique biography is written in a novelistic style, with sections told from Dick's point-of-view and very few acknowledged sources. It is best taken with a large pinch of salt, but Carrere has crafted a gripping look at Dick's life, with emphasis placed on the experiences leading up to him writing *A Scanner Darkly*.

Divine Invasions: A Life Of Philip K Dick
Author: Lawrence Sutin
The most complete biography of Philip K Dick, Sutin's achievement is to weave the mix of ideas, events, and turmoil that defined Dick's existence and suffuse it with wit, style and genuine insight. It is in need of an update, but there is no better starting point if you want to know more about Dick's life.

The Shifting Realities Of Philip K Dick
Edited by: Lawrence Sutin
For those already aware of Dick's life and work, this diverse collection of essays, biographical material, anecdotes and rants is an illuminating, and sometimes disturbing read. Dealing with his 1974 visions head-on, Dick's writing can be rambling and difficult to read, but it paints a gripping portrait of his restless state of mind.

A Scanner Darkly
Director: Richard Linklater
Based on the book Dick described as his "masterpiece", Richard Linklater's novel Rotoscope technique creates a vivid, distorted reality of intense, swirling colour, perfectly capturing the feel of the book. *A Scanner Darkly* is proof that Dick's influence lives on.

Shadows on the wall

Philosophy was at the root of much of Philip K Dick's writing

Plato asks that you imagine yourself in a darkened cave, tied up and facing away from the mouth with a candle behind you. People pass the candle holding objects, so that you can see the projected silhouette but not the item they are carrying – your entire impression of the world is one of shadow. If you were released and taken outside, you would see the real world but would believe it to be a hallucination. For you, the shadows would be 'real', while the objects that created them would seem to be no more than a fantasy. This is an idea that forms the basis of much of Dick's work.

Most sci-fi writers look to science for inspiration, but Dick's work is more concerned with human perception and philosophy is its basis. "I first became interested in philosophy in high school when I realised that all space is the same size," he explained in an interview with Frank Bertrand. "After that there was the realisation that causality is a perception of the observer and not a datum of reality. In college, I read Plato and learned of a possible metaphysical realm beyond or below the sensory world... Finally, I came to believe that the empirical world was not truly real, at least not as real as the archetypal realm beyond it... Hence, in novel after novel that I write, I question the reality of the world that the characters' percept-systems report."

fictionalising philosopher, not a novelist," Dick wrote in his journal. "My story-writing ability is employed as a means to formulate my perception. The core of my writing is not art, but truth." This feeling, so easy to mistake for simple arrogance, would in reality be borne out by the eager fashion in which Dick's ideas were assimilated by influential late-20th Century philosophers such as Baudrillard and Zizek.

Dick's tendency to focus on and explore the ideas of perception and reality led many to assume that he was heavily inspired by the emerging LSD sub-culture during the Sixties and Seventies. In truth, it wasn't until many years after these themes started appearing in his work that he began experimenting with psychedelic drugs and, like many of his contemporaries, saw their potential for expanding his mind. "There was a time in my life when I thought drugs could be useful," he admitted to *The Aquarian*. "Now, all I think you see are the patterns on the rug turning into hideous things… A friend of mine had a shower curtain with tigers on it. During an LSD trip the tigers started moving and trying to eat him, so he ran outside and burned the shower curtain. That epitomises drugs to me; some guy in the back yard burning his shower curtain."

Substance abuse would play a role in Dick's life – he became addicted to the amphetamines he used to keep himself awake while writing – and his paranoia-drenched masterpiece *A Scanner Darkly* confirms as much. However, it could be argued that Dick's use of drugs has been forced into the foreground by observers desperate to make sense of his frequently outlandish claims.

In the few years following the publication of *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said*, Dick began to notice similarities between what was happening in his life with events in the book. People would show up randomly at the door who shared his characters' names, he would find himself in intricate situations exactly like those in the narrative, and after describing the experiences to a priest, was informed that several scenes from *Flow My Tears* were uncannily similar to the Bible's book of Acts. Despite initial scepticism, Dick read Acts and was immediately convinced. The mysterious coincidence of this series of events would consume his mind for many years.

"A careful study of *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said* shows that, for reasons which I cannot begin to explain, I had managed to retell several of the basic incidents from the book of Acts," Dick wrote. "That was four years ago. For four years I have tried to come up with a theory and I have not. I doubt if I ever will." However, the visions he would later experience (see *VALIS* boxout) gave Dick fresh insight on reality, leading him to suspect that the ideas of the great philosophers regarding reality might be true.

"There is internal evidence in at least one of my novels that another reality, an unchanging one… underlies the visible phenomenal world of change," he wrote in 1978. "A mysterious spirit can put us in touch with it, if it wishes us to see this permanent other landscape. Time passes. Thousands of years pass, but at the same instant we see this contemporary world, the ancient world, the world of the Bible, is concealed beneath it, still there and still real, eternally so." Dick had believed in the possibility of a higher power for a long time, but his vision had given this feeling clarity. He had been chosen by the spirits; he had, as he later told the *Denver Clarion*, "become an object of interest to the divine beings."

The universe did not exist; at least, not according to Philip K Dick. God existed, and the universe was just an extension of God in time and space. Reality was little more than a mass delusion that God, for whatever unknown reason, had forced mankind to believe in. "I'm taking my writing as more fact than fiction than I used to," he told the *Science Fiction Review* in a typically candid interview. "I don't think I ever took it completely as fiction. I was always looking for an answer."

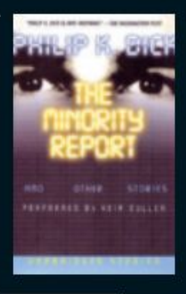
Dick acknowledged that his theory was fallible, but the belief with which he railed against conventional notions of reality was intense enough to lead critics to suspect him of fakery. Not that Dick would concede the point, of course. "Often people claim to remember past lives; I claim to remember a different, very different present life," he said

"Dick's work is arguably the most important in 20th Century sci-fi"

Would Dick have coped with the fame brought by *Blade Runner*'s success?

Sci-fi Timeline
A SELECT DICK BIBLIOGRAPHY

PAYCHECK
1952
One of Dick's first published stories, in 2003 *Paycheck* was adapted for the big screen by John Woo and starred Ben Affleck.



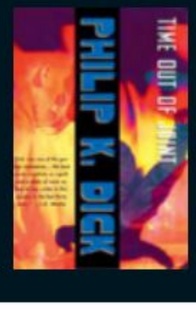
THE MINORITY REPORT
1956
This short story saw Dick exploring the concepts of precognition. It would later be adapted for the screen by Steven Spielberg.

CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST
1959
This look at suburban life in Fifties California is one of Dick's most successful novels outside of the science-fiction genre.

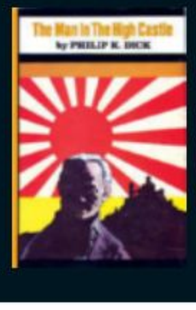
MARTIAN TIME-SLIP
1962
Despite its clichéd setting of a colony on Mars, Dick includes discussion of mental illness and the fallibility of time.

1950 | 1955 | 1960 | 1965

SOLAR LOTTERY
1955
Dick's first published novel clearly marked out his interest in the nature of reality and corrupt elite power.



TIME OUT OF JOINT
1959
Dick's early novel describes the paranoia felt by Ragle Gumm as the world around him is revealed to be little more than a sham.



THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE
1962
The book that won Dick the Hugo Award and established him as an important voice, this imagines a world where Japan and the Nazis control America.

THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH
1965
The story of an alien hallucinogen marketed as a consumer good.

in a 1977 speech. "I rather suspect that my experience is not unique. What is perhaps unique is that I am willing to talk about it." The other accusation was rather more unpalatable: that through the intense pressure he put himself under, he had begun to lose his grip on reality. Discussing *VALIS*, his most obvious exploration of his visions and their implications in his body of work, *The New Yorker* claimed that the prose seemed the work of, "A man who knows he's broken, but believes that breaking has poured forth a flowing of truth."

The life of Philip K Dick is not a model of perfection, but his body of work is arguably the most important in late 20th Century science fiction, and if knowing the truth meant remembering him as a charlatan or wracked by his own disturbed psyche, we might choose to live in ignorance. Or, perhaps, hope, if we were so inclined, because the only other possibility is perhaps the most frightening of all: that Dick was right.

The nature of his visions, however, is lost to irrelevance, because their impact on his wellbeing was enormous. For the final eight years of his life everything he wrote seemed to be in service of exploring the events of 1984, and while Dick showed few signs of embarrassment about his experiences – there's little point in being coy when nothing is real, after all – they obviously took their toll. "I'm hoping I'll be nothing next," he said to the *Denver Clarion*, when asked about reincarnation in 1980. "I'm tired. I've been fighting the Roman Empire in different forms for 2,000 years. Today it's the US Government. I'll leave them alone if they leave me alone."

In September 1981, Dick learnt that two Berkeley-area sci-fi writers had been struck by heart attacks. Exactly what Dick interpreted this to mean is unclear, but the sense of mortality triggered an outpouring of dissatisfaction with his existence. "I drove home and rammed a support column in our underground parking area," he described.

Total Recall failed to live up to the richness of Dick's novella.

"My unconscious was saying 'enough'… I wanted to protest the two heart attacks… I wanted to protest my enslavement to two decades of writing to pay spousal support, child support… to meeting deadlines, renting a tux for the *Blade Runner* premiere, all the long distance phone calls, all the answering letters from readers who plan to commit suicide and want me to talk them out of it, because I wrote about my own suicide attempt in *VALIS*… I do understand. I understand that the payoff for writers is not happiness, but sudden death or total disability. They are, as Jesus said, like your ancestors who ate manna in the wilderness – they are all dead."

Six months later Dick would die, at the age of 54, forever lending the sense of enigma to his life and work that only comes from an untimely demise. He never saw the impact that *Blade Runner* had on sci-fi cinema, or the surge in popularity and value his work enjoyed in the aftermath of *Total Recall*. Secretly, he had longed for the respect such popularity would bring, but his children marvel at how their father's paranoid nature would have coped with modern celebrity. When he wrote his short story 'Paycheck', he sold it for a few hundred dollars; when Hollywood came looking for a vehicle for Ben Affleck and John Woo, the resulting deal brought approximately $2 million to his estate. It is just possible that Dick would have believed such a staggering rise in popularity to be just another part of our mass, global delusion. He may have had a point.

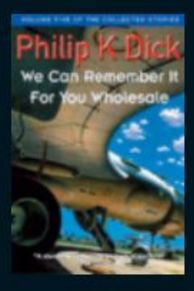
VALIS

Dick's most ambitious work was inspired by his visions

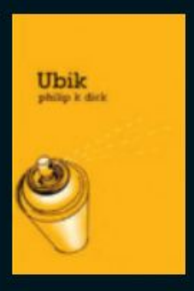
Philip K Dick claimed that there was a voice that had been offering him guidance since high school. It only communicated when he was struggling in vain for a solution and invariably pointed him in the right direction. The presence of the voice fed into his belief that the reality mankind has come to accept is not the truth; that something else exists outside of it. He called the voice VALIS – Visual Auditory Life Intelligence System.

In February 1974, Dick was recovering from having a tooth extracted, still under the influence of sodium pentathol. He answered the door to a girl delivering his prescription when he noticed a fish symbol around her neck that was used by early Christians. Dick fell into a moment that he described as "unforgetting", in which he realised that the passage of time had been stopped in the 1st Century by the Roman Empire, the world of the Bible. It was not 1974; it was AD 70. He continued to receive visions for weeks, making it clear that they were not linked to the drugs.

Dick spent his remaining years attempting to make sense of his visions, most obviously in his hallucinatory masterpiece *VALIS*. A year after his original vision, he wrote this: "It seized me entirely, lifting me from the limitations of the space-time matrix; it mastered me as, at the same time, I knew that the world around me was cardboard, a fake."



WE CAN REMEMBER IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE
1966
Total Recall did little to capture the humour and intelligence of Dick's novella. His Douglas Quail is far more compelling than Arnie's construction worker.



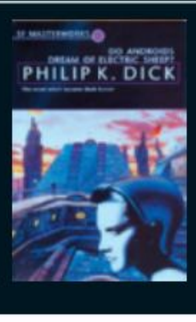
UBIK
1966
One of Dick's most accomplished works, *Ubik* was named by *Time* as one of the 100 greatest English language novels published since 1923.

FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID
1970
Dick's story of a pop singer who loses his identity is justly celebrated.

RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH
1976
This was Dick's first attempt at dealing with the visions he experienced in 1974, but it was published in 1985.

THE DIVINE INVASION
1980
The second book in Dick's *VALIS* trilogy sees Yah, or God, exiled to a distant star system, where it plots to reclaim Earth.

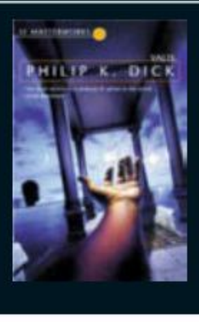
1970 1980



DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?
1966
The book that was adapted to make Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*.

A MAZE OF DEATH
1968
Based around a group of colonists in direct contact with religious deities, Dick talks about the nature of reality while also assessing the human desire to die.

A SCANNER DARKLY
1973
The book's vision of a dystopian LA consumed by drug culture directly feeds off Dick's own problems with addiction.



VALIS
1978
Plagued by visions of another world, *VALIS* is Dick's most paranoid work. It was the last major novel Dick wrote before his death.

THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER
1981
Written a year before his death, this is arguably Dick's most philosophical work.

16

THE TERMINATOR

Cybernetic assassin sent back in time to kill prevent the birth of resistance leader John Connor, the classic T-800 is both a terrifying enemy and a fearless ally

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ THE TERMINATOR is an unstoppable killing machine completely devoid of pity and consumed by its objective: kill the unassuming Sarah Connor before she can give birth to the resistance leader who could topple murderous AI Skynet.

The machine passes for human – well, for Arnold Schwarzenegger – until the climax of the film, where its skin is burned away revealing its monstrous exoskeleton.

Star Arnold Schwarzenegger returned for *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* as a T-800 identical to the first, only reprogrammed to save John Connor. The character became an unexpected father figure and hero, while "I'll be back" became an catchphrase for the actor as well

The only instance of a role listed in both the AFI heroes and villains lists, the Terminator is a true icon.

TERMINATOR GENISYS is available on Blu-ray from Paramount Home Entertainment priced 14.99.

THE HISTORY OF THE TERMINATOR

BIRTHED BY A FEVERED DREAM, THE TERMINATOR HAS GIVEN US JAMES CAMERON, ARNIE, AND SOME OF THE FINEST SCI-FI FILMS OF ALL TIME. HERE WE TAKE A LOOK BACK AT HOW SKYNET WAS BORN, AND HOW HUMANITY WAS, HOPEFULLY, SAVED...

If you had said back at the start of the Eighties that a low-budget sci-fi actioner starring an Austrian body builder would be deemed by the Library of Congress's National Film Registry as "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant," you'd have found yourself locked up in Pescadero State faster than you could say "I'll be back". Yet with James Cameron's *The Terminator* that's exactly what happened. As well as finding itself selected for preservation, the film made the career of the future Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, launched James Cameron's pioneering assault on the film industry, as well as birthing one of the most beloved sci-fi franchises in cinematic history, reaching through five films and a television show as well as a vast array of comic books, videogames and various other tie-in paraphernalia.

Birthed from a fevered dream James Cameron had while stricken ill in Rome, the idea for *The Terminator* was simple and direct. "I've been fascinated ever since by our human propensity for dancing on the edge of the apocalypse. So when I wrote the first *Terminator* outline around 1982, I was just working out my childhood stuff," said Cameron, in a 2009 article that he wrote for *Wired*. "It was also born out of the science fiction movies and literature I grew up with. For the most part, they were warnings – about technology, about science, about the military and the government. You couldn't escape those themes or the fear of nuclear holocaust." Aiming for a definitive robot film, Cameron didn't come up short, his time-travelling apocalyptic tale of man versus machines instantly taking on the mantle that Cameron had, quite ambitiously too, set for himself. But the shape the film would take, and the iconic characters it produced, could have been vastly different.

Originally the Terminator was conceived as small and anonymous, the sort of appearance that would blend into a crowd, the exact opposite to the hulking man-mountain that Schwarzenegger would bring to the production. In fact, originally he was slated to take on the role of Kyle Reese, the human warrior from the future sent back to protect Sarah Connor, and Lance Henriksen was to play the time-travelling cyborg, to the point that Henriksen arrived for a read-through in full Terminator make-up, baffling and terrifying in equal measure those at the studio unaware of the role he was going for. Schwarzenegger, though, had a different idea for the role he wanted to play.

After a meeting with Cameron, at which both were still working along the lines of their original casting intent, the realisation that Schwarzenegger would be better quickly came to the forefront, Cameron's mocked-up artwork with his Austrian star-to-be as the titular character convincing the suits. Michael Biehn snagged the role of Reese himself. Biehn initially impressed at his audition, but nearly missed out on the part as a Southern accent he had been carrying – the morning before meeting Cameron he had auditioned for *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* and hadn't managed to shake the adopted accent before his afternoon appointment – sat at odds with the soldier character Cameron envisaged.

Cameron and producing partner Gale Anne Hurd were both Roger Corman alumni and their shared experiences of working with the (in)famous filmmaker would shape the way in which they approached making *The Terminator*. It's fair to say that the shoot was anything but a walk in the park, a theme that would come to dominate Cameron's on set reputation in the years to follow.

Shooting at night was tough on the cast and crew, and wore the patience down of the film's executive producer, who reportedly begged Cameron to shoot a few daytime scenes due to the perceived difference in cost. Cameron resisted vociferously for stylistic reasons. In fact, the film and its nocturnal setting, were typified by the naming of the nightclub in the film in which the Terminator finds the right Sarah Connor. 'Tech Noir', as Cameron titled it, was not merely the name of the club but rather a ready-made sub-genre title for the

CHASING THE TERMINATOR

The five finest chase sequences from the franchise

MOTORBIKE VS KYLE REESE
(The Terminator)

1 Kyle and Sarah, after being alerted by a dog's barking, hightail it in a rusty old van with Arnie's leather jacket-clad T-800 in motorbike-pursuit. Sarah's driving, and Kyle's responsible for trying to stop the unstoppable with a collection of homemade grenades.

Finest moment?
A tanker explosion, caused by one of Kyle's grenades, rips the flesh from Arnie's exoskeleton, revealing the silvery Terminator beneath.

TRUCK VS HELICOPTER
(Terminator 2)

2 After stealing the cyborg-arm from Cyberdyne and escaping, Sarah, John and Arnie's T-800 defender make a break for it in a less than sporty truck, with the T-1000 chasing them down firstly in a helicopter and then with the aid of a liquid nitrogen-containing tanker.

Finest moment?
The tanker crashes and out-spills the nitrogen, freezing the T-1000 who then explodes into a thousand pieces by a Hasta la vista-ing Arnie.

JOHN CONNOR VS THE VIADUCT
(Terminator 2)

3 With the T-1000 locating the delinquent JC at a shopping mall, the future resistance leader escapes, with a little T-800 help, on board his motorbike and makes for LA's viaducts. The T-1000, in the cab of a truck, and Arnie, motorbike, shades and shotgun, are both in pursuit.

Finest moment?
After launching himself off a bridge, Arnie overtakes the T-1000's truck, grabs John and makes off as the cab comes to a crashing halt.

ARNIE VS THE CRANE
(Terminator 3)

4 Escaping the animal hospital, John and Kate are pursued by the T-X, driving a truck with a crane on its back. Arnie's T-850, evoking the spirit of *T2*, is pursuing on a half-inched motorbike, this time a police bike. He's still wearing shades too.

Finest moment?
Arnie swinging on the crane as the T-X steers him through the glass front of a road-side building before landing him on a fire truck, much to the surprise of the fire crew.

TERMINATOR VS CAMERON
(The Sarah Connor Chronicles)

5 The pilot for *The Sarah Connor Chronicles* assuaged fans' worries by being every bit the action-fest that the films had been. Building from rescuing the young John Connor from school through a *T2*-esque car chase, and with a healthy dose of time-travelling too, the show matched the film's pyrotechnics.

Finest moment?
Destroying Cromartie with an isotope-fuelled weapon, escaping from the bank vault, and travelling, sans-clothes, from 1999 to 2007.

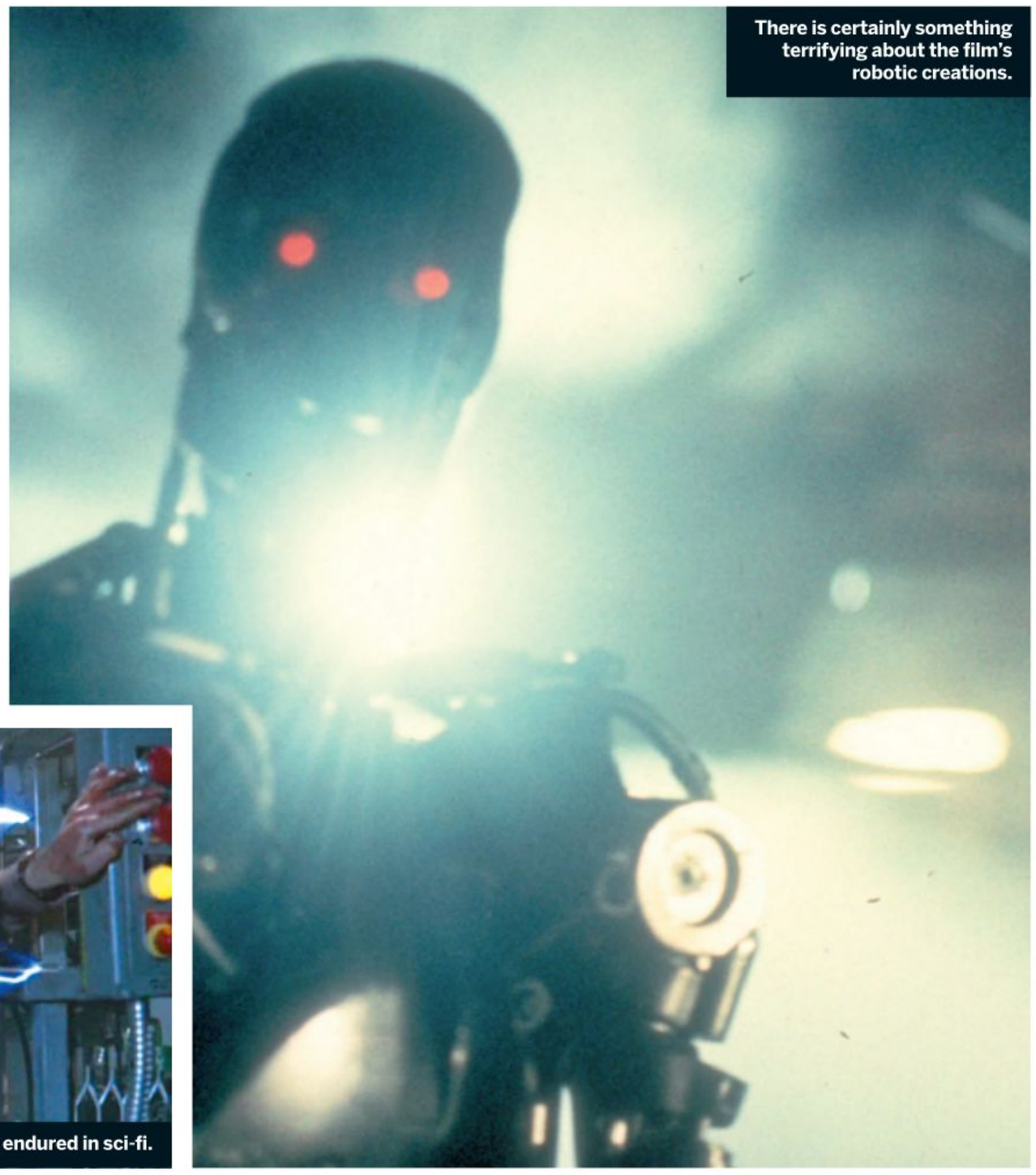
The original *Terminator* was made on a tiny budget compared to its sequel.

film, the meeting of the classic Hollywood noir styles with a futuristic technology bent.

To capture the complex design Cameron has conceived in his sickness-induced delirium for the Terminator's endoskeleton, the Canadian looked to Stan Winston. Then a budding make-up and special effects artist, Winston had his work cut out if he was to realistically capture the essence of the flesh-covered machine, but his ambition was matched only by Cameron's, who wanted a very distinct and obvious dichotomy between the outward human and the inward machine. The results would be some of the most daring effects then conceived, an achievement the franchise would become known for repeating.

One man who was not so enthused with the picture was Harlan Ellison. Cameron attributed part of his inspiration for *The Terminator* to two episodes of *The Outer Limits*, 'Soldier' and 'Demon With A Glass Hand', both penned by Ellison, but the sci-fi scribe saw more than just inspiration, his voicing of discontent at this resulting in an 'acknowledgement credit' as well as a hefty payout. The film picked up three Saturn Awards, though – Best Science Fiction Film, Best Make-Up and Best Writing – and more importantly was a box office hit. On a meagre budget of $7 million, certainly compared to Cameron's later career extravagances, it pulled in a respectable $78 million internationally.

Arriving in 1991, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* took the template set out by *The Terminator* – fast-paced storytelling, jaw-dropping action, deft characterisation – and dialled it up a notch. The budget had swelled to $102 million and the resultant film was the movie event of the year, but as well as financial changes, there were other changes afoot too.



There is certainly something terrifying about the film's robotic creations.

The man vs machines theme has endured in sci-fi.

"SARAH ENDS UP MORE OF A MACHINE" JAMES CAMERON

Fresh from being the unstoppable nemesis in the first film, Arnold's T-800 returned for the sequel as the protector, a refreshing development for Schwarzenegger who was keen to play a good guy for once. His purpose this time around was to protect Sarah Connor and teenage son John from a new Terminator, an advanced model T-1000, which had been sent back to finish what T-800 number one had failed to do.

"For a while we thought about having a double-Terminator, a double Arnold, but thought it might get too complicated," Cameron discussed in an interview with fellow screenwriter and screenwriting teacher Syd Field, "then we had one of those no-brainer ideas – why not have the Terminator reprogrammed to play good Terminator."

With the ultimate killing machine put through its paces by teenage John, played by Edward Furlong, it learns the meaning of a human life, resulting in a final scene goodbye – "I know now why you cry" – that tugs at the heartstrings, as Cameron intended, but it was not the only 'character' development to be made.

Introduced as a girl next-door type, Sarah begins a transformation in film one that would be taken to its conclusion in the sequel. Emboldened and in full understanding of the importance of her and her son, by *T2* Sarah Connor has transformed from a plucky waitress into a muscled, weapons-trained soldier with winning the war as her sole aim. "She starts out one way, becomes fixated on that, and ends up becoming more of a machine than [Arnold's character] does," Cameron explained of Ms Connor's development.

Character developments are one thing, but *T2* would be making a splash upon its release not just for its repurposing of Arnie's talents. If *The Terminator*'s effects were groundbreaking then *T2*'s were just out of this world. The T-1000, the liquid metal 'mimetic poly alloy' Terminator capable of morphing its shape to disguise itself and twist itself into different forms, stabbing ones especially, took then-nascent computer-aided effects to the next level. "It was always a matter of urging the effects specialists to go further," Cameron said of the envelope pushing that would result in the creation of Robert Patrick's T-1000, in the same Syd Field interview. "I wanted the effect to look like a spoon going into hot fudge – it dimples down then flows up over and closes."

With the T-1000's effects – produced predominantly by Industrial Light & Magic, and Stan Winston's practical effects – spellbinding audiences, and critics alike. Despite the hefty price tag, an unheard of sum in those days, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* was a resounding success at the box office, picking up almost $520 million worldwide as well as nabbing itself four Oscars too for, unsurprisingly, the technical departments of Best Sound, Makeup, Visual Effects and Sound Editing. The franchise, though, while sitting 'top of the world', would be about to undergo one hell of a transformation itself.

Long muted but never really gaining any solid development, the notion of a third *Terminator* film took a long time to gain any momentum. *T3* was beset by behind-the-scenes problems – both Orion Pictures and Carolco, the studios behind one and two had ➢

Will we see another instalment of the great robo-fight?

The cold, hard touch of the Terminator

A franchise that absolutely will not stop

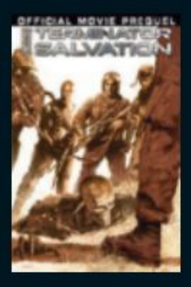
TAKE A RIDE

The Nineties oddity that is T2 3D: Battle Across Time

In 1996, James Cameron opened a *Terminator 2* 3D experience that reunited members of the cast, including Schwarzenegger, Hamilton and Furlong, at Universal Studios in Florida. It was an original *Terminator* storyline built with the 3D technology in mind, and, despite seeming gimmicky now, at the time it was revolutionary in its use of the technology. Of course, the ride now has the pleasure of having its technology upstaged by the ride's creator – *Avatar* makes the *Terminator 2* 3D experience look like amateur hour. Nevertheless, it's worth seeing for its further depiction of the post-Judgment Day apocalypse.

FOUR COLOUR KILLERS

The comic books of the robo-ruined Terminator universe



Remarkably, the *Terminator* licence has made its way between nine comic-book publishers since the first movie hit cinemas, including Marvel and, most recently, IDW Publishing for the *Terminator Salvation* adaptation. Most of the comic-books are of questionable quality, either adapting the movies directly, providing unnecessary back story or, in the worst cases, pitting the machines against other properties. In its time at Dark Horse Comics, the Terminator faced off against Superman, Aliens, RoboCop and Predators in what can only be described as a complete waste of everyone's time. Evidently, the *Terminator* franchise's best moments remain on screen.

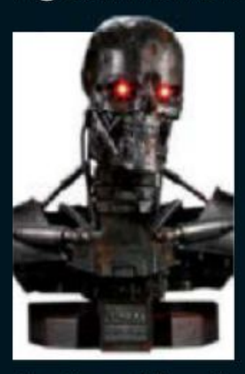
VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

Twenty years of Terminator videogames, for good or bad

Appropriately, a franchise about technology taking over has taken over almost every videogame platform since its release. From the fondly remembered original DOS game in 1990 (pictured) through to the full 3D graphics of *Terminator Salvation*'s tie-in, the sophistication of videogame systems can be charted by the progression of the franchise. There was even a chess game (yes, chess) developed by IntraCorp and published by Capstone Software for DOS in 1993, as well as arcade machines, pinball games and Game Boy software.

COLLECTABLE CARNAGE

A global memorabilia invasion



Almost as widespread as the videogames arm of the franchise, its comic output and the theme park rides put together is the collectable aspect. *Terminator* toys were a staple of many childhoods around the time of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*'s release, and as the franchise has matured, so has the level of collectables available. Recently, the T-800 forearm from *Judgment Day* sold at auction for over $25,000, while the leather jacket worn by Arnie went for nearly $5,000. Cheaper collectables exist, of course, but for those willing to pay top dollar, you can still get a life-sized Terminator in your living room. But not a real one... yet.

SCORING JUDGMENT DAY

Brad Fiedel's iconic soundtrack

Brad Fiedel initially wrote solely for television until he was picked by James Cameron to pen the score for *The Terminator*. His metallic sounding, pulsing theme was one of the key contributing factors to the film's success, and remains as iconic a component of the film, and the ensuing franchise, as Arnold Schwarzenegger himself. Fiedel then went on to work on *Fright Night*, and its sequel, and scored *Blue Steel*, directed by Cameron's one-time partner Kathryn Bigelow. He returned to the world of cyborgs and Skynet for *Terminator 2*, however, knocking out another great soundtrack for the robots, and reteamed with Cameron again for the 1994 actioner *True Lies*, and scored the 1995 Keanu Reeves sci-fi-er *Johnny Mnemonic* too. His film career has slowed somewhat since the late Nineties, though, and while his music themes were used for *T3* he was not directly involved with the film himself, but he still remains the author of one of the most recognisable, and chilling, sci-fi scores of all time.

"MOVIES WITH 3 AFTER THEM ARE NOT VERY GOOD"

gone bankrupt – and when it did arrive in 2003 it was in a vastly different form to what anyone, not least the fans of the franchise, would have expected. Shorn of Linda Hamilton, and Sarah Connor (she had died of leukaemia), Edward Furlong and, most surprisingly James Cameron too, there was little to link this second sequel with its predecessors, save for the presence of Arnold Schwarzenegger who, after much time attempting unsuccessfully to convince Cameron to return, signed on to reprise his role as the T-800, again in the protector role. With so much room left for newcomers, Nick Stahl took on the role of John Connor, now a young man living 'off the grid' so as to avoid Skynet tracking him down and Claire Danes joined as Kate Brewster, John's future wife. The role for a new Terminator was filled by Kristanna Loken's T-X, the first female Terminator, and one beset with all kinds of weaponry that would make the T-1000's 'stabbing arm' pale in comparison.

Most talked about at the time, though, was the behind-the-camera line-up change with Jonathan Mostow (helmer of the decidedly revisionist Second World War submarine drama *U-571* and action thriller *Breakdown*) stepping into Cameron's role, and he always had very clear intentions for the film.

"I wasn't trying to relaunch the series," he said in an interview with *IGN* after the film's release, "I was simply trying to make a movie that would be the third in a trilogy and stand up with the other movies. Let's face it, most movies with a '3' after them aren't very good."

Indeed, the arrival of *Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines*, lived up to, in part, this acknowledgement of the regular fate of 'Part IIIs'. Yet the film stayed true to Mostow's intention of not reinventing. A chase format predominates its tale as John flees the T-X with a T-850 for protection, it delivered in the action stakes, with one multi-vehicular chase scene in particular attracting plaudits, and had enough of a new take on the time-travelling fate of Judgment Day to ensure that it had enough of a life of its own.

Although highly successful blockbusters, the first two *Terminator* movies also had something of an indie spirit to them. *T3* didn't. Taking up the budget-pushing endeavours of *T2*, *Rise Of The Machines* upped the ante by being the largest budget ever to be greenlit by a studio – $170 million – and it is clear to see where much of this, other than Arnie's hefty price tag, went. The film also received plaudits aplenty for its stunt work as opposed to purely CGI-aided action set pieces, with films of the era more often than not content to merely greenscreen away until audiences had become numb to the effects generated.

A key area of concern for the filmmakers, as well as the fans, was Arnie's involvement, and whether the 12 years that had elapsed since would prove conspicuous in the finished film. When a motorbike accident laid the former Mister Universe up in hospital with a number of cracked ribs, it seemed, certainly to the film's director, that *T3* would have to be postponed, yet the T-850's resilience and steadfast dedication to the project surprised everyone.

"A few weeks later, when most of us would just be getting out of the electronic bed that lifts us and are maybe thinking of going from the walker to the crutches, he's back in the gym three hours a day working out," Mostow told *IGN*. "On some of the advanced make-up stages he had six hours of make-up to do, he'd have to show up at four in the morning, we'd shoot and at lunch we'd stop. He had a special trailer here with a gym and so he worked out and then shoot the rest of the day." Arnold's determination paid off, though, not just in his ability to convince in the role he had made his own almost 20 years earlier but by Mostow's assertion that, as a result of all of his training, he had the same body dimensions as he did for *Terminator 2*. "He brought in his *T2* jacket... It fit like a glove!"

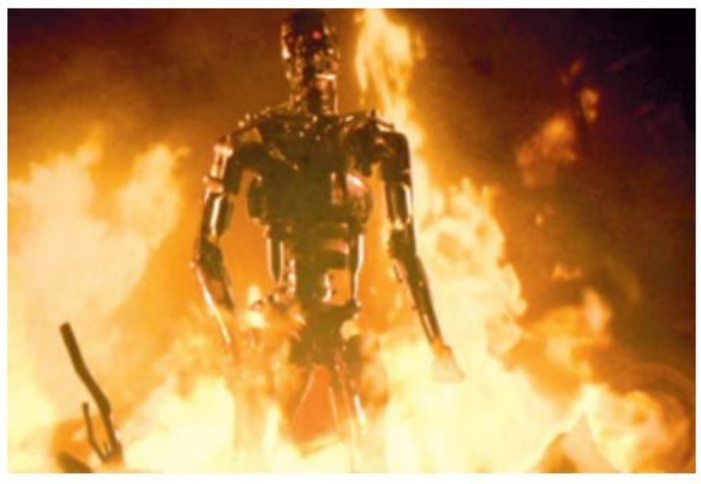
Audiences remained unconvinced and although the film pulled in $433 million, it was less than some had expected. The film's change in tone was cited as one of the reasons, and the shift into not campy but almost tongue-in-cheek humour (the T-X's breast inflator and Arnie's Elton John specs clear cases in point) certainly didn't sit with the Skynet saga so far. It would be a while before the franchise returned, and the effect of *T3* would be felt in more ways than one.

"I developed and worked on the movie *Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines*," said James Middleton executive producer of *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* – which premiered on Fox in 2008 – in a roundtable interview with The Futon Critic. This

Terminator is the ultimate robot franchise, which many others have aped across the years.

TERMINATE THIS

Five reasons why the Terminator franchise is indispensable



STAN WINSTON'S ENDOSKELETON

Winston's crowning moment from the first film, based on Cameron's designs, achieves the effect of conveying what a moral vacuum the Terminator is – the ultimate killing machine. An expert piece of effects work, it remains a key step in the development of visual effects, and has aged well. When it steps out of the burning remains of the truck in *The Terminator*'s climax, it is terrifying, whether it's 1984 or 2010.

THE GOVERNATOR

A body builder, then Conan the Barbarian, then Governor of California, but forever a Terminator, such is the influence of Arnold's on-screen performance that he will be always remembered for his iconic turn(s) as the killer-defender from the future. Heck, he even used some of his most loved lines from the franchise in his campaign speeches. 'Hasta la vista' indeed.

LIQUID METAL

The arrival of the T-1000 brought not just a new model of Terminator, but a new dawn in visual effects. Two years before Spielberg opened *Jurassic Park*, the sight of Robert Patrick's head reforming after receiving a shot gun blast to the cranium, or the spectacular death scene in which all of the characters the T-1000 has adopted in its quest for JC morph in a fatalistic gasp for an extended battery life, were unlike anything movies had seen.

TIME TRAVEL PARADOXES

Who doesn't like them? Sarah Connor even confesses herself the brain-pickling peculiarity of it all and that you could 'go mad' thinking about it, but the trans-temporal logic of the films is part of what makes them so very irresistible. And while it's not quite as cool as a time-travelling DeLorean, time-flying in a giant electrical bubble is pretty damn nifty, we must say. Losing your clothes is a bit of a bummer, though.

"I'LL BE BACK"

"Come with me if you want to live"; "I'll be back"; "Hasta la vista baby"; er... "She'll be back!" – the series boasts definitive catchphrases left, right and centre, many of which have surfaced time and again. When the T-800 extends a hand to Sarah Connor at Pescadero State and offers his iconic greeting of help, it's hard not to be cowed by how cool it is, but it's not quite as cool, though, when John Connor says it in *Salvation*.

Arnie's presence may not be very stealthy, but it sure does demand your respect.

SKYNET'S DESIGNS ON MANKIND

THE TERMINATORS

From obvious-to-spot T-600s to hyper-advanced T-Xs, Skynet's killing machines have taken many guises. Here we take a look at some of the most iconic forms they have adopted...

T-800 ▲

Why do they look like Arnie, surely not the best visual approach for an infiltration unit? But it is an effective, and deeply chilling, one and despite facing off against Terminators more advanced and complex than it, the 'classic' T-800 design usually comes out on top too.

HYDROBOTS ▲

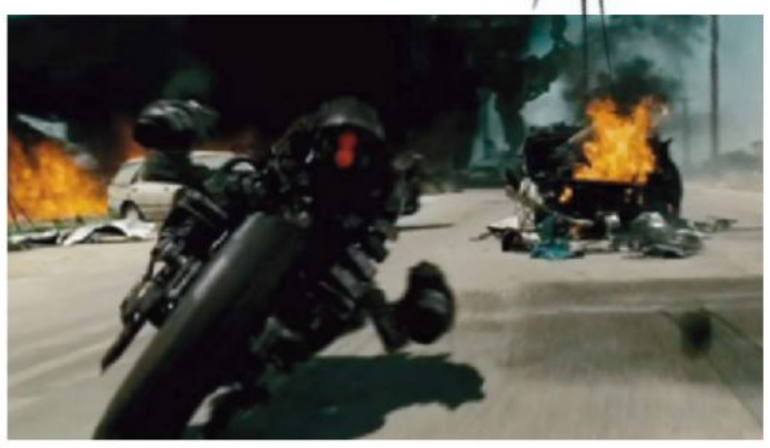
Underwater Terminators that look like some sort of robo-sea snake mutated from those tentacle creations in the *Matrix*-verse, the Hydrobots can, obviously, swim through the water. But they're rubbish on land, which is where most of mankind is, and Terminators can, like, hold their breath anyway!

AIRBORNE H-KS ▲

The flying hunter-killers, glimpsed firstly in flash-forward sequences in Cameron's franchise starter, and seen in McG's most recent addition, are towering, flying machines that swoop over the Earth and pretty much adhere to their rather catchy and spot-on nomenclature – they hunt stuff and then kill it. So not good if you see one coming over the brow of the hill.

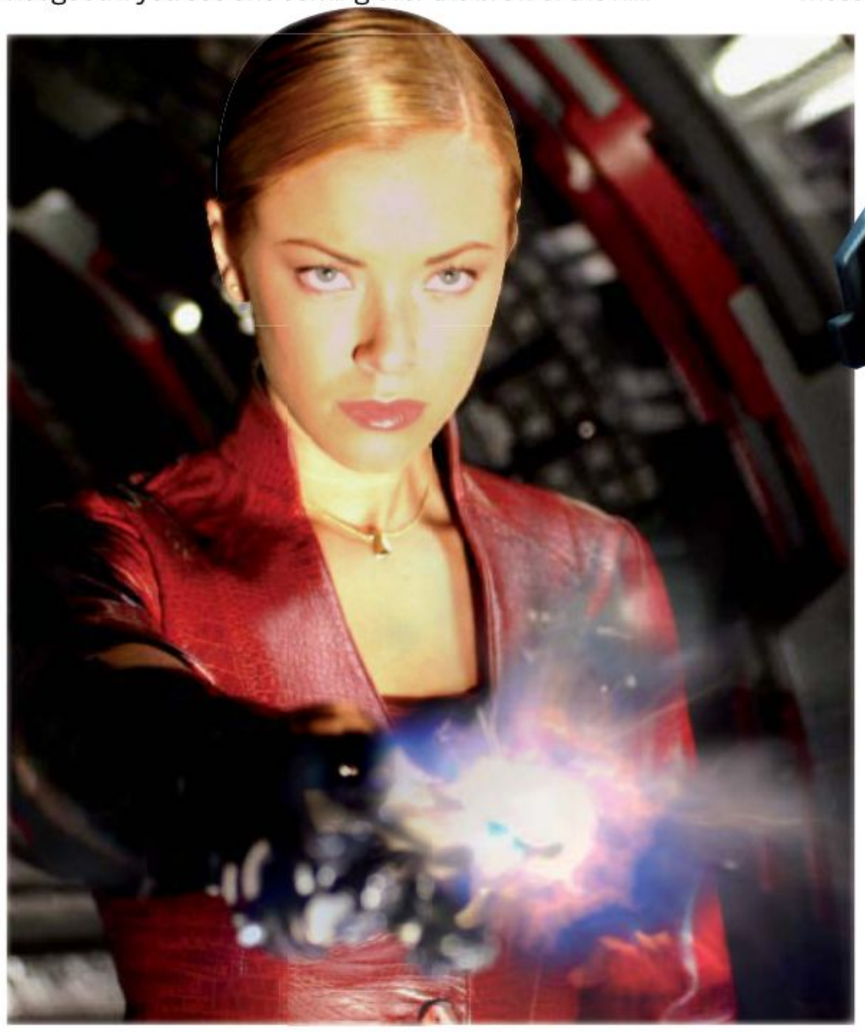
T-1000 ▲

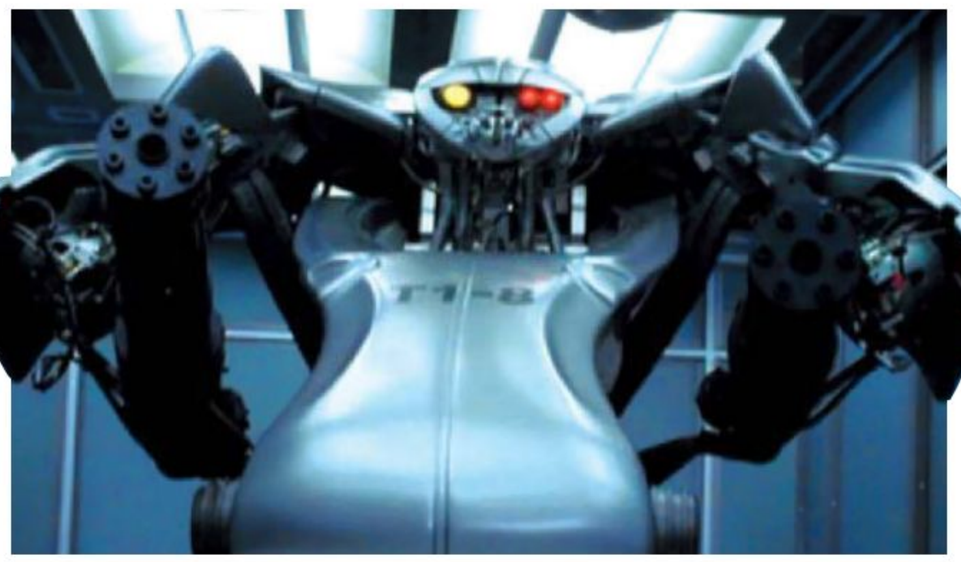
If the T-800 was a tank, then the T-1000 is a Porsche, James Cameron explained of the design aesthetic behind *T2*'s rather terrifying creation. With liquid metal for a body and the ability to morph into any shape it so pleases (mimetic polyalloy, to coin a phrase), Robert Patrick's Terminator is one of the series' most famous.



BIKES ▲

With Terminators that are taller than a house, and ones that can fly, it seems unnecessary, yet very cool, to have ones that look like radio controlled bikes, yet that is what Skynet did. After all, nothing is achieved without trial and error. After one got knocked over and repurposed by John Connor they probably saw the error of their ways, though.



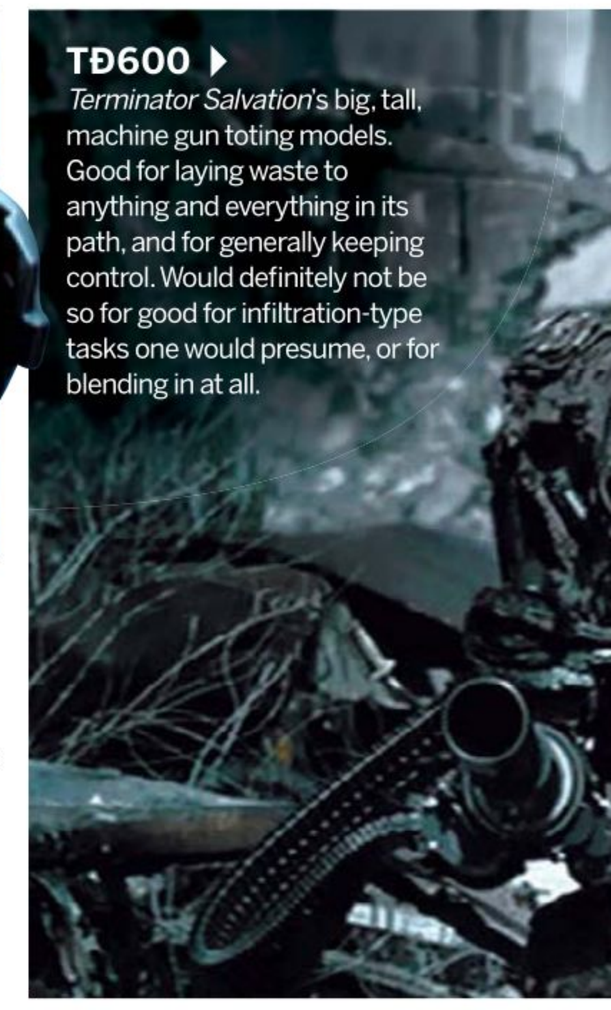


T-1 ▲

An early stage in the development of the Terminators, these robo-pioneers run on tracks like a tank, have eyes like WALL•E's love interest, and machine gun arms like ED-209, and are there at the start when the machines begin to take over. Simple they may be, but they do represent Skynet's affection for efficiency.

◀ T-X

Armed with an assortment of hi-tech gadgetry (the ability to control most machines), arm-mounted weaponry (always a bonus), and inflatable boobs too (of course) the T-X, or 'Terminatrix', is an ultra-advanced Terminator. It still manages to get usurped by Arnie's, slightly older looking, T-850, though, despite tech advancement that would have Steve Jobs giddy with excitement.



TĐ600 ▶

Terminator Salvation's big, tall, machine gun toting models. Good for laying waste to anything and everything in its path, and for generally keeping control. Would definitely not be so for good for infiltration-type tasks one would presume, or for blending in at all.

Sarah Connor Chronicles kept up a high level of action.

◀ SUMMER GLAU'S CAMERON

An unspecified type of Terminator, Cameron is one of the most advanced, particularly in relation to her ability to mimic and convincingly pass off the depiction of human emotions, and her ability to eat too, which is quite handy tool when trying to pull this off.

HARVESTER ▲

Michael Bay noted the Autobot similarity in *Salvation*'s hulking beasts, and there are similarities to be noted in the tall bi-pedal giants sent out to catch humans. Why do they do this? So that the human prey can be zipped off for secret research.

"THERE IS NO FATE BUT WHAT WE MAKE"

was five years after the future was rewritten in *Rise Of The Machines*, and the *Terminator* franchise was back, minus Arnie and a theatrical release thanks to its new small-screen guise. "And after that movie was released, I felt like I really – as a fan of the franchise – I really wanted to see Sarah again. And the idea of seeing her on a television show was even more interesting to me because you get to see more of what makes Sarah an iconic character." The plight of Sarah and John began once more, in serialised form, ignoring the theatrics of *T3* and following on from *T2*, and there were many similarities with the Cameron *Terminator* years, not least the naming of the new protector Terminator, played by Summer Glau – Cameron. The 'characters on the run' format was reprised with John, Sarah and Cameron fleeing, with the thematic emphasis on the mother-son relationship. "Sarah is always concerned about her mortality from the standpoint that she worries about dying and whether her work will be done," *SCC* executive producer Josh Friedman explained to *i09*, speaking about the narrative arc.

The show received a heavy marketing push prior to its premiere, which pulled in 18.6 million viewers Stateside, the highest in three years for a scripted drama, and Fox's highest for eight years. The first season attracted a not immodest 11.4 million viewers too, leading to the commission of a second season beginning in the autumn of 2008. However, falling ratings saw the second season audience figures drop to 4.63 million and the show was not renewed, despite plans already being well underway for the third season, with Friedman lamenting on an official show blog that "good shows are cancelled every year, smart shows, worthy shows."

With Sarah Connor Chronicles cancelled, the way was clear for the franchise to boom its way back onto the big screen in its fourth cinematic outing. "I wasn't at all interested in making *Terminator 4*," director McG told *The Telegraph*. Traditionally he was music video helmer with a handful of feature films to his name, and at the time of the announcement of his role as director of the new franchise instalment, most of the fanbase's reactions would have been, to be honest, similar. It seemed like a strange direction for the franchise to take, but as information began to trickle out the future for the series began to look up.

"The first three *Terminator* films were present day pictures where Terminators come back in time to hunt Sarah and John," he explained. "Our film takes place post-Judgment Day and is a look at the world that James Cameron only ever teased us with in the earlier pictures. [He] always maintained he had told the story after two pictures and it was only the idea of dealing with the future war that piqued my interest. Everything is difficult for humans now. It's difficult to get food, difficult to get energy, everything is depleted and they're being hunted."

Essentially a war film where the resistance is battling Skynet and its hordes of Terminators, McG's film abandons the chase movie dynamics that the preceding three films had adhered to. A prequel as well as a sequel, in many respects, it expanded the *Terminator* franchise in a new direction, without maligning that which had gone before. Indeed, McG even visited Cameron before the film to ask for his blessing, outlining his intentions for *Salvation*, yet he was met with a less than favourable response, Cameron only saying he hoped the picture would be good and that he would save his opinion until having seen it.

After much legal wrangling had been dispensed with over the rights, The Halcyon Company picked up ownership and embarked on what was slated to be a new trilogy in the series, with shooting on this proposed first instalment lasting for 77 days in New Mexico. Opting for a new look, the film took on a post-apocalyptic visual identity, the backdrop being the burnt-out wasteland of post-Judgment Day, a stark contrast to the contemporary cityscapes of the original three films. The production was not without its set backs, though. On set injuries are commonplace, and were no less present here – it was a $200 million action film after all – but more damaging were two events that rocked the production to a greater or lesser degree.

Firstly there was new John Connor Christian Bale's now infamous on set 'freak out', for want of a better expression, the actor succumbing to a moment of method madness that saw him verbally berate a crew member in an extensive, and extended, four-letter-word frenzy. The hitch being that while these sorts of incidents tend to become Hollywood folklore, this particular one was captured, recorded and leaked onto the internet. Much chuckling and parody ensued in internet forums and newsrooms around the world, but for McG, the incident was taken out of context.

"I'm to blame for the whole thing," he proclaimed in another *Telegraph* interview. "It's my job to create a safe environment on the set at all times so that actors can explore any given emotion and believe in the sanctity of the film set. If that's taken out of context it would seem wildly offensive. In a great many ways this is a war movie so I am on the set getting in Christian's face to get him fired up and that's never meant to get outside that arena." Outside it went, though, and the incident was widely reported, even as far as making BBC breakfast news, at which point an oversight led to a portion of the tirade being broadcast without any editing.

The second incident was the original ending being leaked onto the internet, causing the production to have to change the film's conclusion, keeping the thematic essence, but changing the events.

The film opened in the summer of 2009 but despite the fervour for a new *Terminator* instalment, and the change of direction the film offered the film failed to live up to expectations, for viewers, critics and ultimately the studios behind it. For a film that is essentially the most expensive independent film of all time, it recouped its estimated $200 million budget but only managed to make it to a global haul of $372 million, less than *T3* and a far cry from *T2*'s blockbusting.

The Emilia Clarke-starring (and confusingly named) *Terminator Genisys* marked a slight improvement at the box office, but was again criticised for its convoluted plotting and poor performances. Despite these recent missteps however, the franchise's legacy is secure: integral in the evolution of special effects, one of the most beloved sci-fi series of all time, and preservation in the annals of contemporary cinema via the national Film Registry. But, as Linda Hamilton's Sarah Connor said: "There is no fate but what we make for ourselves."

17

KARA 'STARBUCK' THRACE

The hard-drinking, hard-fighting and eternally insubordinate Starbuck was an antihero first and woman second, as Katee Sackhoff made the reboot her own

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ WITHIN THE first hour of the *Battlestar Galactica* miniseries Kara 'Starbuck' Thrace is in the brig for punching a superior officer. Hard-drinking, cigar smoking and cocky, Starbuck was the best Viper pilot on Galactica but her tough exterior hid many personal scars. The abusive childhood she suffered at the hands of her pushy military mother was brutal and the death of fiancé Zak Adama left its mark, but brought her closer to both Lee and Commander William Adama, who saw her as a daughter figure.

Kara is at her happiest in the cockpit of a Viper doing something reckless, or being a smartass but she is also a wounded soul with complexities beyond mere rebellion.

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA THE COMPLETE SERIES is available on Blu-ray from Universal Pictures UK priced at £34.99 each.

THE REAL STARBUCK

ASS-KICKING COMBAT PILOT WITHOUT PEER, KARA 'STARBUCK' THRACE REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC ELEMENTS OF THE BATTLESTAR GALACTICA REBOOT. WE SPOKE TO STAR KATEE SACKHOFF BEFORE THE FOURTH AND FINAL SEASON OF THE SORELY MISSED SHOW...

Starbuck gets all kinds of action on the show. Which is tougher for you to film, a fight scene or a love scene? And is there anybody left among the cast that you want to have one or the other with?
You've got to start out with a good one, too. I'm sitting across the table from my boyfriend right now. I would say that the sex scenes are a lot harder than anything that I've ever had to do on the show. Because it's not natural – it's just odd, it's very odd. It makes you kind of feel cheap, like you're being paid to or being allowed to, in a sense, cheat on your significant other. It's very weird. But the fight scenes are really easy, and they come pretty naturally for me to be honest. But... no I can't. I mean, who would I want to fight on the show? I don't know. I haven't fought Sharon, so I'll go ahead and say that. I think that a fight between Eddie [Olmos] and I would be pretty interesting.

Dirk Benedict (who played Starbuck in the original series) once said, "They tried to cut my balls off in Hollywood and now they have" when he found out that you were assuming his character – to which you responded, "I know he feels emasculated but they've replaced him with a great rack." How cool and gratifying has it been that you won over those fans who were first sceptical and negative? And on a larger scale, how gratifying has it been that this version of the show has gained so many fans in general?
It is completely gratifying in a sense, for the full reason that it's nice to have people identify with the character that you're playing and appreciate the work you're doing. I don't think I went into this trying to win over the old fans because I think that you can't ever please everyone, and I didn't want to focus on people that were all ready in a sense, you know, spewing negative energy at me. So I just kind of did what I did, and it's nice to know that some of them have been converted. For all the people who said that it wouldn't work with a woman, it's kind of nice to know that it did work for sure.

When was the moment that you won over audiences that were reluctant to accept Starbuck as being a woman instead of a man?
Honestly, what made people accept Starbuck as a woman was that she was just such an interesting character. I think once people put their guard down as far as the preconceived notions of what the show was supposed to be and just allowed it to be really good science fiction, I think that's also probably the same time when people accepted Starbuck for being a woman – when they stopped thinking of the old show. It'd be hard to figure out when that probably happened, but probably after the first season – that cliffhanger at the very end, that probably got all the fans hooked.

What should we make of the positioning in that terrific 'Last Supper' picture of the cast? For instance, you're with Anders (Michael Trucco) and Lee (Jamie Bamber) is alone, Six (Tricia Helfer) is in the Messiah's position...
It's interesting that everyone thinks that there's something hidden in that 'Last Supper' photo – like, if you look hard enough you can find there's hidden messages in it. To be honest, I think we would have had to have been in on it to create a hidden message and we were all just there having a photo shoot. It is interesting the way people are standing, for sure. I mean, the plastic sheath with Anders is interesting... and the fact that they made Tricia the Messiah is pretty interesting, too. But, you know, I wish I knew what they were thinking.

Can you talk a little bit about how the marriage between Starbuck and Anders will be handled this season?
If I knew, I would tell you. I have no idea. We are at episode 14 right now in our shooting schedule and I am no closer to being able to have any questions answered from last season than I am now.

It's not really being played up, then?
I think that – without giving too much away here – there are more important issues being dealt with right now on the show for these characters than what Starbuck is and how her marriage is. There's a lot of really heavy things happening right now, and I think that her marriage to Anders is the least of her concerns.

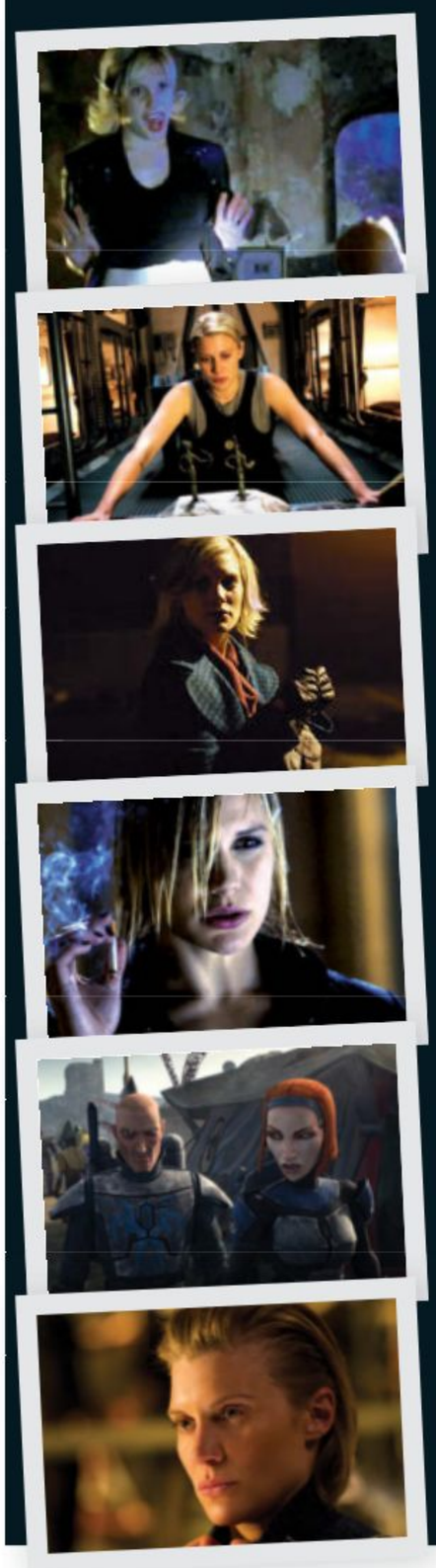
Your boss, Ronald D Moore, is directing his first episode now, or just recently. Have you worked with him and how was that?
I've got to say, he's the first director I've ever worked with that, after every take, he says thank you. And I noticed that because... what the crew does, what an actor does, at times can be overlooked because it's what we're supposed to do, and to have someone thank you after every take is very interesting. I found that after a take, I stood a little taller, I was a little happier, and I was, like, "Wow, that must have been really good." Even though I didn't ask him, because God forbid he said, "No, I was just saying thank you, but that was shit, Katee. You're going to have to go again." So he was a great director. Granted, I only had one scene with him, but [him saying thank you is] one thing I noticed that I've never had happen before, and it goes to his character as a person. He's a fantastic man.

Could you speak a little bit about Starbuck's mental state going into season four and what finding Earth really means to her?
She's very fragile, you know. She's extremely lost. We've never seen Starbuck so alone and so lost. And she's a little distressed, not only because of the way that people are treating her, but because of the questions that her coming back has ⇨

Sackhoff is not interested in a *Battlestar* movie.

BATTLESTAR STORIES

Sackhoff's career in sci-fi, fantasy and horror



HALLOWEEN: RESURRECTION (2002)
Sackhoff starred as unfortunate Michael-bait in this atrocious sequel to *H20*. Given her obvious talent, it's a shame that she can't seem to pick particularly good films to act in.

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA (2003)
Probably the best science-fiction show of recent years, Sackhoff courted controversy at first for being cast in the role of Starbuck, which in the original series was a male character.

WHITE NOISE: THE LIGHT (2007)
Another turkey for the actress appeared in the form of *White Noise: The Light*, where she starred alongside Nathan Fillion in the story of a man who is able to predict peoples' deaths.

BIONIC WOMAN (2007)
Referred to in less-than-friendly terms by Sackhoff, *Bionic Woman* was a real missed opportunity for NBC, in which the only good things were the actress and a disgraced actor taken on board halfway through.

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS (2012)
Another day, another strong woman in a long-running sci-fi franchise, this time as the snarling second-in-command of the Mandalorian Death Watch across a four episode arc.

RIDDICK: RULE THE DARK (2013)
Playing the only woman in the team full of future mercenaries on the hunt for the titular Riddick gave Sackhoff an oppourtunity to channel some of Starbuck's belligerence as Dahl.

raised in her own mind. And as far as Earth, I think it's her revolution. I think it's her end. I think that she's putting so much on this one thing, this one task that she believes is her destiny, that I think she wouldn't let anything stand in her way, anything. When that is the case, you've got a very scary person on your hands, when they're completely willing to sacrifice everything to accomplish something. That's scary. So I think that we're going to see a lot from her this season that isn't [what you're used to], kind of like a shell of her former self, but at the same time a lot of her doing things that you don't necessarily agree with.

Have the producers told you what exactly happened to Starbuck during her supposedly dead time?
No, we're on episode 14 and I've read 15, and nope. Yeah, I don't think we'll figure that out until the last second.

When you saw the script for *Razor* at the end, where the Silent Hybrid makes the prophecy that Starbuck is a harbinger of doom, what was your initial reaction and how has that reaction changed?
I think that when I read that, I went, "Of course she is – what else could happen to Starbuck." I'm, like, "Come on, you know, lay it all on me, the worst possible thing. And there you have it, fantastic, she's going to kill everybody, great." I think that is something that has been carried through the entire season so far. As far as whether or not anyone knows, you're going to have to wait and find out on what it really means. It could mean so many different things.

Ron Moore has said that he's not interested in doing a *Battlestar* feature film. Do you think you could change his mind, and if so, would you be interested in doing that film?
No, I wouldn't want to change his mind. I think he's right. He said that what would end up happening is that you would have to focus on one or two characters. What's so brilliant is that it's been a four-year movie, and we've had the time to tell these stories about each person individually. Really, had you become invested in those characters, to do a two-hour movie or a one-and-a-half-hour movie, I think that takes away from that what we've been able to do for so long. It really does take away. I mean, how do you pick which two characters, and when you pick those two characters, are you going to flip off the other 17 main characters on the show? How do you define what to do? I think he's right. Plus at the same time, when I'm ever actually done with the show, I'm done with the show. As much as I love the job or don't love the job, the last thing I want to do is come back and do it again, when I've already done it. Granted, you know, talk to me in five years if I haven't worked, we'll see. But as of right now, I have no desire to do a movie.

What has surprised you the most about Starbuck's evolution throughout the last three seasons?
I think what's surprised me the most is – wow, I don't know. That people consistently depend on her shocks the crap out of me. That has always been very interesting to

Sackhoff has said that the romantic scenes are tougher than the fight sequences.

me – that people still ask her to go save the world like that.

In what ways can we expect her character to evolve this season?
Well, I think that she will hopefully have a resolution of some sort. I think that's something we can finally depend on in a sense; that's something she might actually finally get. But at the same time, I really have no idea. I would love for her to find peace. And I think that if there's any justice in the world that she will actually have that, because she's been through so much hell. I think it's only fair that she get a little peace toward the end.

If you were in total control of how your character ended up toward the end of this last season, how would you have your character go out?
Die.

You'd like to have her die? How would you like her to die?
I don't know. Maybe something will blow up again on the ship. I don't know that there is any way to end it with her being happy. What I do wish for her is peace – whatever form that comes in, I'll be happy with it. I want for her to finally have a sense of calm in her life. That would be very interesting. And whether this comes with death or some kind of transcendence of some sort, whatever happens, that's what I really want for her.

The Admiral has been like a father figure for Starbuck for a very long time now, but in the new season, it seems like the Admiral really doesn't know what to believe of Starbuck upon her return and is initially very sceptical. How does that, from someone like him, affect Starbuck and her mental state?
I think that's the worst thing that could ever happen, you know. He's the person that she gets her validation from – she gets everything from him. He kind of sets the mood and the tone for how she feels about herself. And to have that person doubt you is, I think, the worst thing that could happen to her. Because, as far as she's concerned, regardless of what she is, she's the same person she was when she left. And I think the worst thing is she wants his trust.

Since Season Three, the relationship between Lee and Kara has gone through quite a lot of changes. What you think about them now? Is this something that could ever work out or are they in a bad cycle of just repeating mistakes?
I don't know. I don't think that Lee and Kara will ever be happy together. I don't think they're meant to be together, you know. I think that they're meant to be best friends, they're meant to push each other, they're meant to have those arguments that drive you – that's the purpose that I feel they serve in each other's lives. I don't think that they were ever meant to love each other. So, you know, with that being said, I don't think they'll ever end up together; I never did really. I think I said in an interview yesterday, if anyone is fitting for her, and if there's anyone that she would actually allow herself to be happy with and be with, it'd probably be Leoben. Anders is too weak for her emotionally. Lee is too much of a boy scout. He makes her feel guilty for her anger and who she is, you know, her faults. He makes her feel guilty just by being who he is. And so if there was any person that she could let her guard down with and be happy with, it's probably Leoben.

Starbuck's journey takes on a far more mystical aspect in season four of *BSG*.

> "I think everyone is going to be very shocked. This season is going to ruffle a few feathers"

The nature of Starbuck's return is a big mystery this season. We don't know if she's the original, a clone, a Cylon or some figment of Lee's imagination. So from an acting perspective, have you made an internal choice to play Starbuck as one of those possibilities or are you holding out for the reveal?
No, I think it's a strong enough internal choice, you know, to play the fear, to play that she's lost, and I think if I play that, it leaves the door open to question what she is. Our show is about playing the reality of something, and how do you play the reality of knowing that you are something when you don't really know what you are? You play the question; you play the uncertainty.

Can you give some more teasers about what we're going to see in this final season of *Battlestar Galactica*?
I think that everyone's going to be very shocked. [This season] is probably going to ruffle a few feathers, and I don't think that there's any way to make everyone happy. I said to Ron Moore from the very beginning, "Please don't wrap everyone up in a pretty little box and put a bow on it," and he would never do that because that's not real, you know, and *Battlestar* has always been based on reality. And so I think that he will give it an ending that is fitting of that, of *Battlestar* and, you know, make it not pretty, which is hopefully what will happen.

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MARIA

The first robot ever depicted on film in Fritz Lang's pioneering silent sci-fi film Metropolis, Maria is a true design classic, aped but rarely equalled

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ WHEN AN exhausted Brigitte Helm asked Fritz Lang why she should play the role of the masked robot Maria when no one would know it was her in the costume, her director answered that he would.

Even those who have yet to see *Metropolis* know its most famous scene from posters, references in other films and even fashion. The robot's blank, serene face as circles of light pass over her body transforming her into Maria's doppelganger is one of the best remembered in all of science fiction and a pioneering moment in special effects' history.

Like Frankenstein's monster, Maria is an example of artificial life proving to be destructive. *Star Wars* concept artist Ralph McQuarrie also took inspiration from Maria when designing C-3PO.

METROPOLIS (REMASTERED AND RESTORED) is available on Blu-ray from Eureka Entertainment priced at £9.73.

REBUILDING METROPOLIS

FOR YEARS, 30 MINUTES OF THE LEGENDARY 1927 SCI-FI MOVIE METROPOLIS WERE THOUGHT LOST TO THE RAVAGES OF TIME AND CENSORSHIP. THEN, IN 2008, THE MISSING SCENES WERE FOUND HALFWAY ACROSS THE GLOBE. WE SPEAK TO FRANK STROBEL, CONDUCTOR ON THE SCORE OF THE RESTORED AND REMASTERED VERSION, WHO RECALLS THE DAY HE SAW THE FOOTAGE HE BELIEVED HE'D NEVER SEE...

Metropolis was heavily edited following completion.

Imagine a movie you're obsessed with – say, *Blade Runner* or *A New Hope* – was missing 30 minutes of key scenes that you had never seen before. You see fragments of a classic sci-fi work in there, but the whole as the director intended it just eludes you, forcing you to fill the gaps with your own imagination. Fans of Fritz Lang's 1927 expressionist masterpiece *Metropolis*, the revolutionary and ambitious result of the Weimar Republic's brief stability in pre-war Germany, experienced this curious phenomenon ever since the film's initial release.

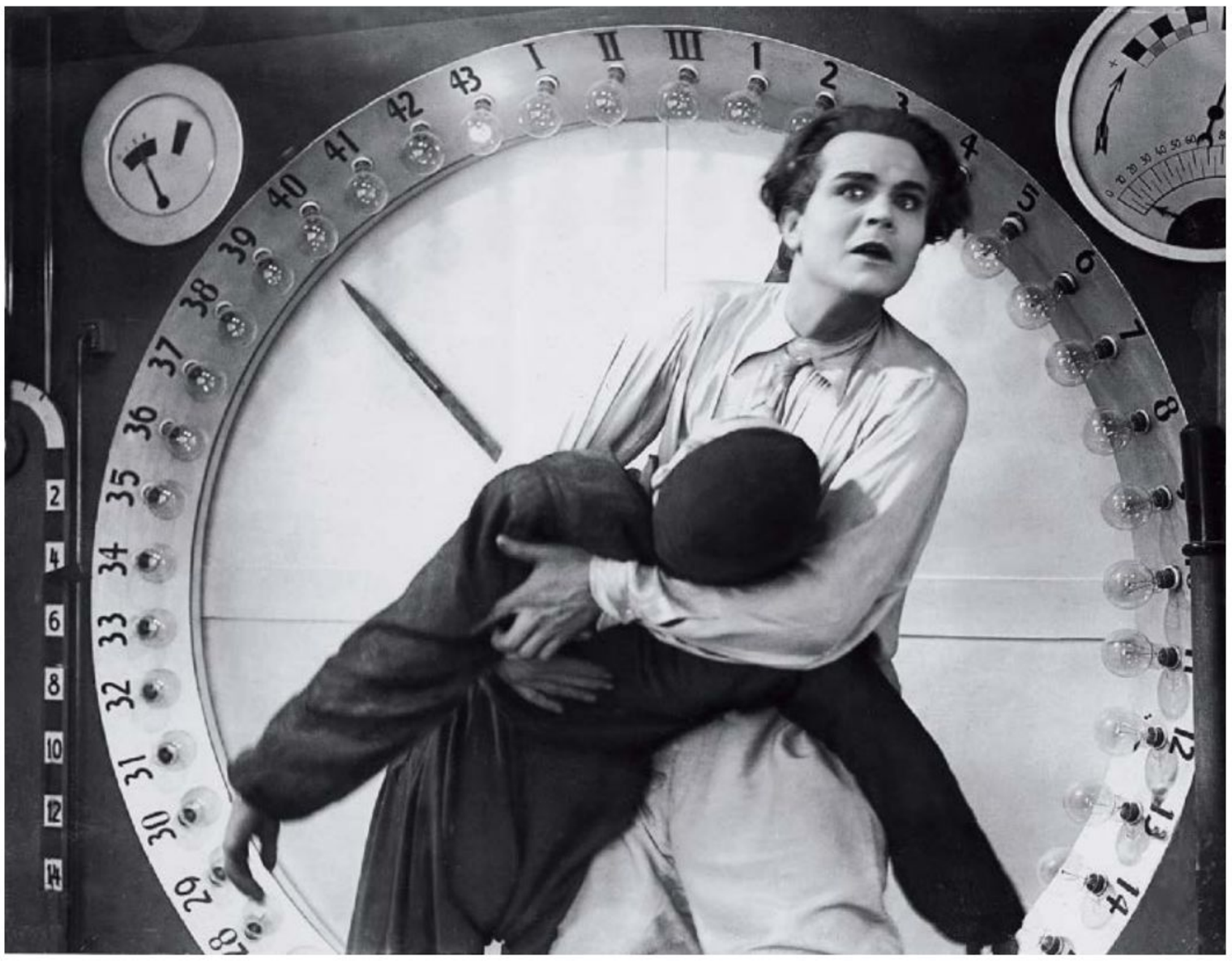
The film went through a turbulent production, taking its toll on director Lang and star Brigitte Helm, before being mercilessly cut down by the studio. Premiering in Berlin at 153 minutes, the film was immediately edited down thereafter for international audiences, removing key scenes that were essential to the structure of the story. The American version was infamously about an hour shorter. By the time the film was out there, Lang was ready to wash his hands of it.

Even after extensive research for the 2001 remastering, which involved scouring the archives of collectors and museums the world over, a 124-minute cut that replaced many key scenes with stills and subtitles was thought to be the final iteration of *Metropolis*. So, imagine when the missing footage, thought lost forever by all who had ever had their imagination captured by Lang, was discovered lying in a film museum in Argentina. We recently spoke to Frank Strobel, who conducted the music for the 2001 remastering and 2010 restored edition, and was a key figure in bringing these 84-year loose ends to a close.

"I originally came from musical theatre, from opera, but I started to work with film very early", he tells us. Among other productions, Strobel has conducted live music to silent movies like *Frankenstein*. "My first arrangement was the original score of *Metropolis* when I was 16, and I understood and decided that was a very interesting form of art… When *Metropolis* came out, it was a revolution in cinema."

Strobel elaborates. "For me, that's my personal story in it. I was responsible not only for the reconstruction of the music; I also did the restoration of the film with two other guys, two years ago. What you have now on Blu-ray or in the cinema is the new version that the three of us were responsible for, so that was my relationship with *Metropolis*. In the new version, the recording of the music is my recording. When you see it in London or in the cinema, that's our recording."

With *Metropolis*, Fritz Lang and his production team pioneered so much of the imagery that we now commonly associate with sci-fi, most notably the idea of lower classes residing on the lower levels of tiered cityscapes and the upper classes living at the peak of extravagant high-rises, which lives on in everything from *Judge Dredd* to *The Fifth Element*. The transformation of Maria, too, is one of the movie's most



Thanks to its dramatic visuals, *Metropolis* is revered as a triumph of expressionist cinema.

iconic scenes, yet the overall story was deemed too complicated for audiences by studio executives at the time – hence the cuts.

We ask Strobel what went through his mind when the found footage came to his attention. "I didn't believe it. I didn't believe, because when I first did *Metropolis*, it was 1983, and then I did it again and again, I changed the arrangement, I changed the synchronisation and so on, because the film was reconstructed, and in 2001 there was the big digital restoration of the movie that was premiered at the Berlin Film Festival. And for this occasion, we commissioned a new score by a German composer, and there was a big premiere gala in Berlin; after that, all over the world."

To Strobel and the rest of the team behind the restoration, it seemed like the final milestone of *Metropolis*. "Everyone said 'that's the final version', because they did a big research of all the archives all over the world, all the collectors, and then of course, the digital restoration. But it was clear – it was missing half an hour of the film. But for me, it was the seventh version of the film I wad worked with."

Strobel begins to laugh. "So then, two years ago we got this message. 'There is a print in Buenos Aires with the missing material.' And we said, 'hohoho!' because we heard rumours about the missing scenes so often. There was this meeting in Berlin. They brought the print, and we all looked at it." The conductor looks serious, for a second. "And everyone was really shocked. When you work with a film for 25 years, you get an idea in your mind of the missing scenes, of what is in there and how it looks. And suddenly, you're sitting there, and you see it. And that, for me, was a totally amazing process. So then of course we thought, 'we have to start again with all the work'."

It was, of course, a massive labour of love. If you'd spent the majority of your adult life working on an unfinished film, only to discover that story could be completed, it would shake you to the core – and that's exactly the effect this lost cut of *Metropolis* had on Strobel. "There were two surprises. One surprise was the missing scenes", he explains. "But secondly – and that was always my problem in the years before – when I tried to do a synchronisation work of the original score by Gottfried Huppertz to the film, it doesn't fit exactly even with the scenes that are complete. It always felt like the music was faster or slower for no reason, and we had no explanation for that.

"NOW, WHEN YOU SEE THE MOVIE, YOU HAVE THE FEELING THE STORY IS TOLD FLUENTLY" FRANK STROBEL

"Then came the Argentinean version, but with a different edit. And then I did the analyses, and that was the point in the restoration we stopped. I said to my colleagues, 'It's very strange, because now the movie is working for the first time.' Three months, complete analyses of the Argentinean version, and we're now 100 per cent convinced the original print went to Argentina in a time when there was no censorship. Because there was a premiere in Berlin in '27, it ran for a very short moment and it was stopped from being released, and they said, 'we have to cut the movie down because people don't understand it'."

"That was the first censorship", he continues. "Then for America, they did a new version that Fritz Lang never accepted. Then there were more acts of censorship later on for political reasons and so on and so on. The original director's cut – we all thought it was lost, because they also used the negative to do the restored versions, so it wasn't in the right order anymore. In the Argentinean version, the distributor, who wanted to distribute it in South America, took the print immediately after the Berlin premiere – that's what we think – so it was out of the continent at that time, so it survived in the original editing. And that was the second surprise."

When we caught up with him, Strobel is conducting a synchronised live action score for *The Matrix*. Discussing the similarities between *Metropolis* and the Wachowski siblings' 1999 classic, he calls them "really related" in their progressive nature. We ask if the conductor has a passion for sci-fi. "That's by accident! But you are right. I think, for a musician, science fiction is very interesting. In science fiction movies, the composers were allowed to experiment – whatever it is, I've found a lot of examples of science fiction movies where you can say it has a very interesting score. Just recently, and I will do it again next year in Berlin, I did a concert with just science fiction music. It's very obvious to me that it's so interesting."

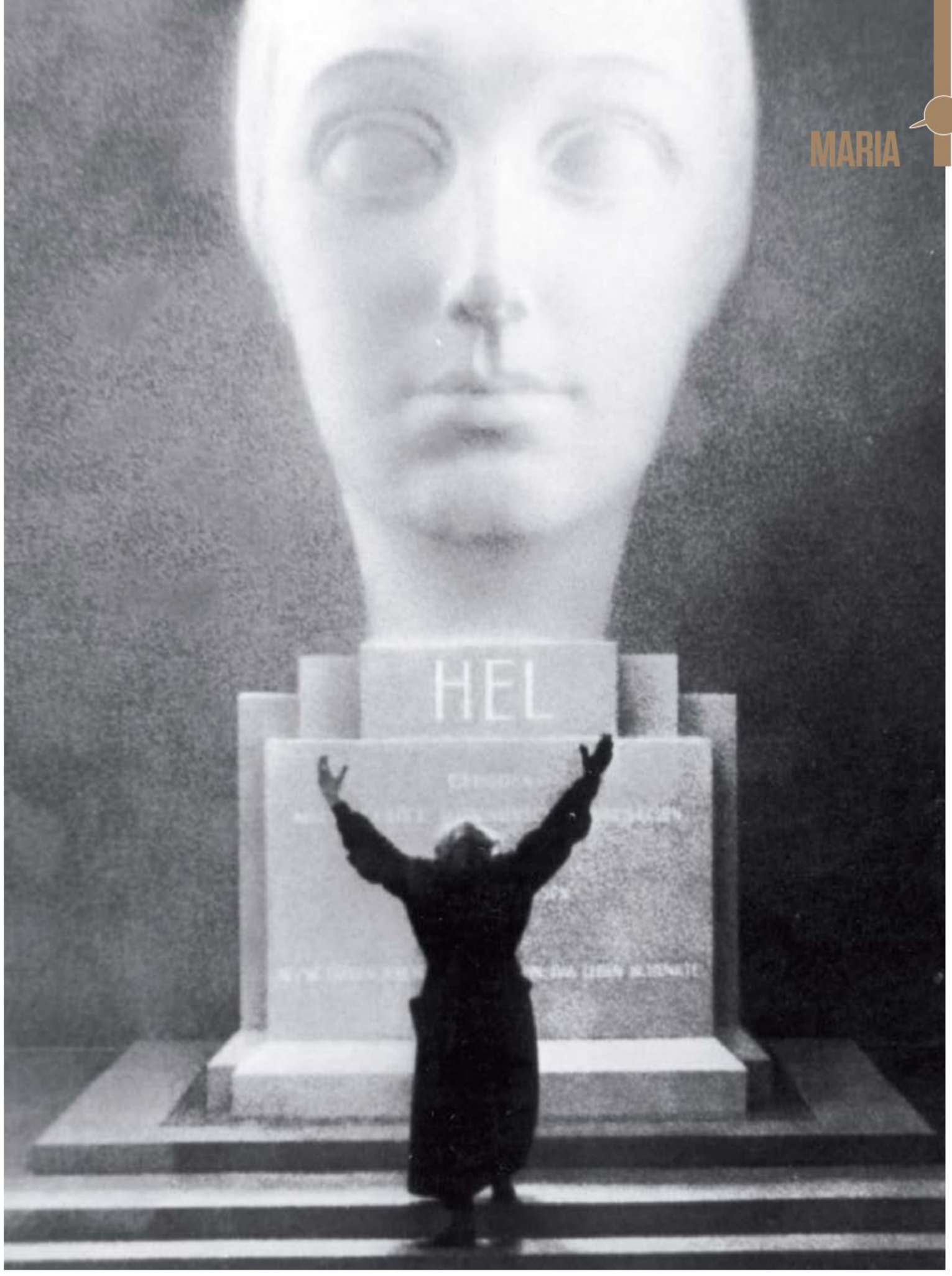
We mention to Strobel that all of those sci-fi films we categorise as masterpieces also have scores that are equally magnificent. He concurs with our verdict that this genre in particular unlocks the imagination of composers who work within it, just as it does for filmmakers, actors or screenwriters.

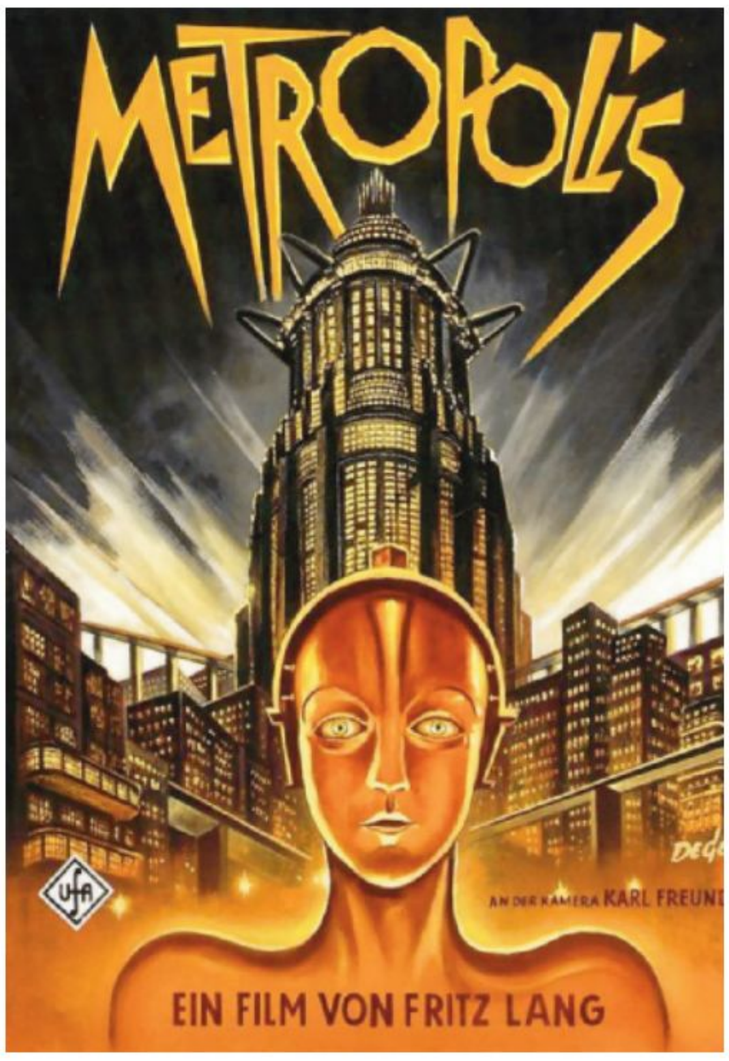
"It's open. It has something to do with fantasy, it has something to do with these unreal worlds that open up possibilities for composers. And, of course, the genre itself is more open – you always have limitations from producers, and when you're doing a 'real' movie the music is always under a lot of pressure. It's very difficult to break out the system. With science fiction music, it's much more easy."

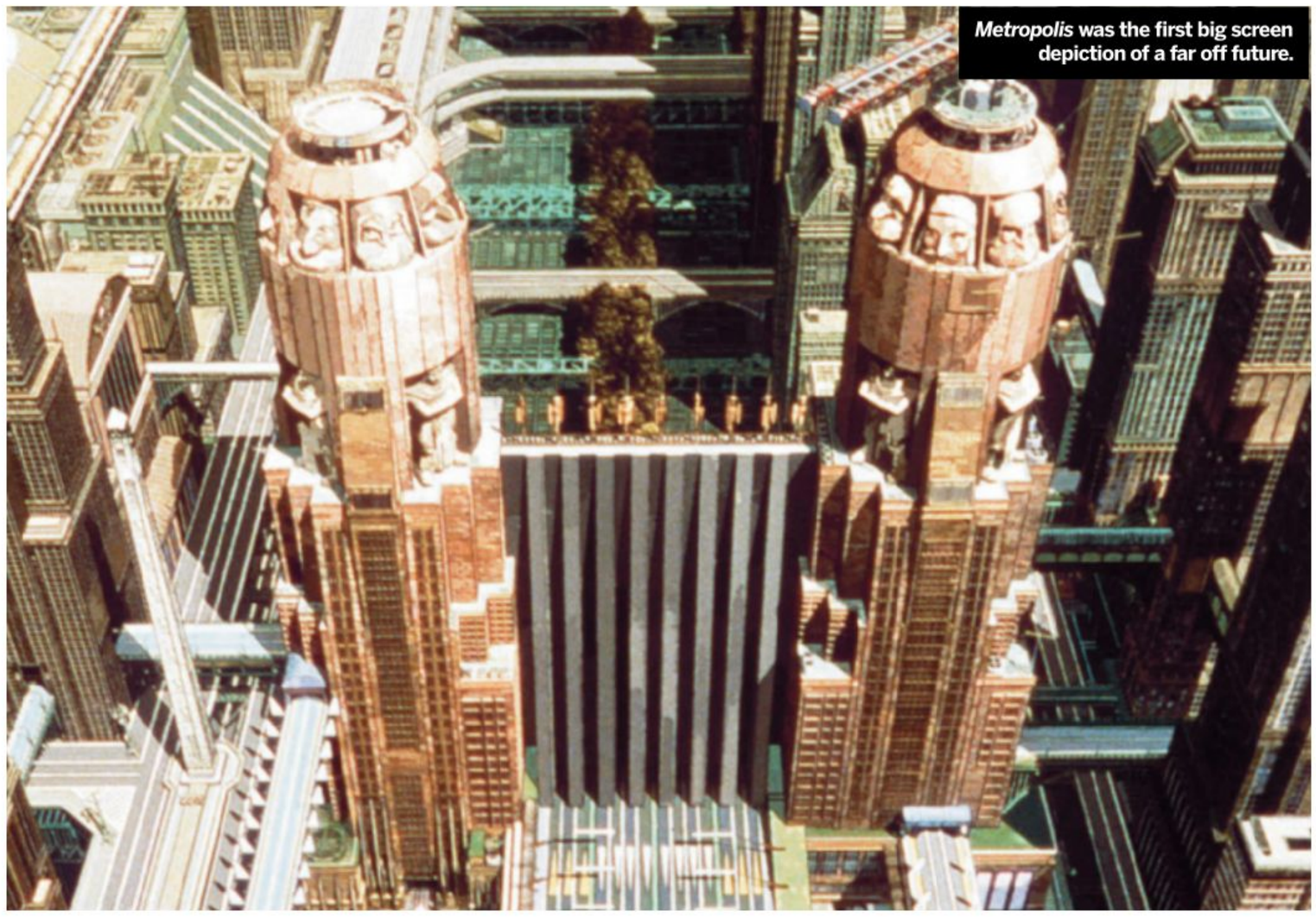
Clearly, Huppertz was as visionary as Lang, and it's the construction of this score that has kept Strobel fascinated by *Metropolis*. Why was the music out of sync? What was in those missing scenes? What did Fritz Lang truly intend his audiences to see? These questions kept Strobel motivated for literally decades, and now, with the footage restored, all these questions have been answered, and *Metropolis* can credibly be called a complete work.

"Now, when you see the movie, you have the feeling the story is told very fluently, the music fits perfectly to the picture, and it's now a very fluent process – which it never was before", Strobel proudly tells to us. "When we had the premiere last year at the Berlin Film Festival, and it was broadcast live in some European countries, everyone was so impressed. Everyone was saying, 'I've now seen a new film'. People once said the story was boring – not anymore. Now we have the chance to see the film under another light."

There's still around eight minutes of lost *Metropolis* footage that filmgoers have never seen, with some sequences damaged beyond repair; yet, this newest restoration reaffirms the movie as it was originally intended, offering fascinating insight to generations of viewers who, like Strobel, previously had to fill in the gaps themselves. The story behind *Metropolis*' long journey to completion – or thereabouts – is as fascinating as the enormously influential movie itself. It's also more than a little uplifting that this silent science fiction picture can elicit such passion 84 years after it premiered.







Metropolis was the first big screen depiction of a far off future.

19 GODZILLA

Giant atomic monster that terrorises the streets of Tokyo and a Japanese pop culture icon, Godzilla is the first and last word in oversized beasts

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ JUST THE name Godzilla is enough to trigger memories of fleeing locals and that distinctive roar. Japan's most famous monster made his first onscreen appearance in the 1954 film that bears his name and has gone on to become a worldwide pop culture icon. The name is actually 'Gojira', a portmanteau of two Japanese words 'gorira' (gorilla) and 'kujira' (whale) Anglicised to Godzilla.

Born from nuclear war, Godzilla emerged post-Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a metaphor for the destruction caused by nuclear weapons. He has appeared in countless films, comics, and television series sometimes as the lesser of two evils and the defender of humanity against even greater threats.

Hardly built for stealth or speed he's an endearing monster so famous that he has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

GODZILLA UNLEASHED

UTTERLY ICONIC, THE BYWORD FOR B-MOVIE DESTRUCTION AND AN UNDISPUTED HOUSEHOLD NAME, THERE'S A WHOLE LOT MORE TO GODZILLA THAN A GHASTLY US REDUX AND MEN IN RUBBER SUITS KNOCKING OVER CARDBOARD CITYSCAPES. HERE WE EXPLORE THE AMAZING TRUE STORY OF THE KAIJU CRAZE ORIGINATOR IN THE AFTERMATH OF GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S GODZILLA-FLAVOURED PACIFIC RIM AND GARETH EDWARDS' ACCLAIMED GODZILLA REBOOT...

Meaning 'big lizard' in Japanese, Godzilla (or Gojira in Japanese) is one of the Far East's most famous contributions to world cinema. Unfortunately, UK fans have been dramatically under-served when it comes to the character's vast oeuvre. Indeed, aside from a DVD spin for the original 1954 outing and a badly dubbed edition of 1962's largely self-explanatory *King Kong Vs Godzilla*, the sole way in which to digest the rampaging reptile's various Japanese jaunts is via import discs or old British VHS releases. Inevitably, this has meant that when many people hear 'Godzilla', they associate the fire-breathing behemoth with the more widely seen and widespread American remake from 1998. However, in reality, the *Godzilla* franchise represents a vast legacy in monster mash-ups, many of which are meditative of Japanese culture and identity. As a result – and putting rubber suited-shenanigans aside for a second – the films often feature fantastically imaginative special effects and a unique sense of creativity.

Of course, in 1954 – when the black and white bombast of *Godzilla* opened to a blockbuster box office reception in its native Japan – the country which birthed the big guy was less than a decade removed from the atomic attack that captivated the world. Certainly, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki instigated an already flailing Japanese army into immediate surrender. What had been the premiere force in the area ended World War II amid a sea of radiation and red-faced retreat. Moreover, having been on the receiving end of the atomic bomb, Japan saw the devastation and death such a weapon could cause first-hand. It was hardly a shock, therefore, that *Godzilla* would explain nuclear radiation as the reason behind the creation of everyone's favourite sea-dwelling, city-stomping, toothsome terror.

The oversized reptile takes almost 22 minutes to appear, and the film resonates with the era in which it was made. Discussions about scientific irresponsibility,

Almost all modern monster movies owe a debt to *Godzilla*.

the threat to human life versus the destruction of the 'monster' and entire cities in panic and under police supervision unmistakably mediate the fallout of the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Godzilla himself, meanwhile, is mostly glimpsed in passing – although his trademark, high-pitched roar rarely fails to antagonise the eardrums. Moreover, the notoriously naff rubber suit (which looks surprisingly menacing in this venture) is kept in the shadows while the solemn monochrome photography and arthouse flourishes – including long moments of character reflection and silence – hint at loftier and less generic ambitions.

"The original was an incredible achievement in special effects for its time," admits JD Lees, editor of *G-Fan* magazine, the long-running *Godzilla* fanzine which has chronicled the character's highs and lows for over 20 years and more than 100 issues. "There is obviously a very serious side to it, and the film plays things straight – there is no joking around."

Produced by the Toho Company, who would become synonymous with Godzilla, and directed by Ishirō Honda – a filmmaker who had fought during the war and also served under the tutelage of legendary director Akira Kurosawa – 1954's introductory opus still holds up today. Although a little slow-going, the impact of certain images, such as when orphaned children sit weeping in front of their dead parents, ensures that *Godzilla* effectively encapsulates the message of

GODZILLA 1954-1975 MEGAREVIEW

Every Godzilla film of the Shõwa period reviewed and rated

Godzilla
(1954, Ishirõ Honda)

One of the most influential, interesting and important monster movies ever made, this is also a lot more serious and well-intentioned than any of the flicks which followed in its footsteps. If you haven't seen this little gem of Japanese cinema then you certainly owe yourself a late night viewing – it remains something special.
★★★★☆

Godzilla Raids Again
(1955, Motoyoshi Oda)

In this black and white sequel, Godzilla destroys Osaka and also fights his first nemesis: the four-legged dinosaur Anguirus. This is a so-so sequel, clearly lacking Honda's eye for technical detail, but there is still some fun to be had with its snowy landscapes and the central gargantuan grudge match.
★★★☆☆

King Kong Vs Godzilla
(1962, Ishirõ Honda)

The first *Godzilla* movie to be made in colour, this is full of carnage, but also indicates the rather inane direction that the series would take in later years. That said, the King Kong suit is kitsch enough to be appealing and the final fight is suitably schlocky. Believe it or not, this started life as *Godzilla Vs Frankenstein*. ★★★☆☆

Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster
(1964, Ishirõ Honda)

Aside from boasting the most annoying theme-noise ever inflicted on anyone's ears, Ghidorah is actually a formidable opponent for Godzilla and the equally imposing Rodan. This is the one where Godzilla ends up being 'good', although we can just about forgive that given all the action Honda throws at the screen. ★★★★☆

Invasion Of Astro-Monster
(1965, Ishirõ Honda)

A bit of a minority opinion this, but *Invasion Of Astro-Monster* – also known as *Godzilla Vs Monster Zero* – is brainless, painless and quite good fun. It now seems a bit like post-war wish-fulfilment, with Japan finally 'in control' of its own weapon of mass destruction as Godzilla is sent to do battle with Ghidorah.
★★★☆☆

Godzilla Vs The Sea Monster
(1966, Jun Fukuda)

When things really began to collapse. This was originally intended to be *King Kong Vs The Sea Monster,* but was hastily rewritten when Toho decided to rush another sequel into production. As a result, Godzilla is less characteristic than usual, while his destruction is oddly off-kilter given the past two sequels. ★★☆☆☆

Destroy All Monsters
(1968, Ishirõ Honda)

An inventive premise, at least, makes *Destroy All Monsters* worth watching. In the year 1999, all of the world's monsters have been contained on a faraway island (à la *Jurassic Park*), although some space cretins come down, indulge in some mind control and force the beasts to try and destroy Earth. Yes, this is all ridiculous, but in its sublime rubber-reality there is still plenty to love. ★★★☆☆

All Monsters Attack
(1969, Ishirõ Honda)

This is the one where Godzilla's son speaks and we also get to see lots and lots of recycled scenes from previous movies. Obviously aimed at very young children, *All Monsters Attack* is best avoided.
★☆☆☆☆

Godzilla Vs Mechagodzilla
(1974, Jun Fukuda)

The instalment where the big 'G' fights himself – albeit in the guise of Mechagodzilla, a fairly formidable opponent. Godzilla spurts blood again – which is a surprise given the series' slant towards child audiences – but despite the increased production values this is all too little, too late.
★★☆☆☆

Godzilla Vs Gigan
(1972, Jun Fukuda)

More outer space-influenced inanity, this time with Gigan (a weird interplanetary oddity with metal hook-hands and a buzz saw on his body) and Ghidorah arriving on Earth to attack Godzilla (who actually bleeds in this entry!). There's too much stock footage here, and the introduction of monster-speech is a strange aside, to say the least.
★☆☆☆☆

Godzilla Vs Megalon
(1973, Jun Fukuda)

Underground crazies take exception to some nuclear tests and send their own monster, Megalon, over-ground to mess up Japan. It's an initially interesting Z-movie idea, but the piss-poor special effects and a friendly robot-man called Jet Jaguar make this as unbearable as the last few features.
★☆☆☆☆

Mothra Vs Godzilla (1962, Ishirō Honda)

This colourful, corporate-bashing classic is arguably the highlight of the entire series. The plot takes in miniature Japanese babes (who control Mothra – the mammoth-sized moth) and curmudgeonly businessmen seeking to exploit the discovery of a mysterious giant egg. In the midst of this, Godzilla destroys everything. ★★★★★

Son Of Godzilla (1967, Jun Fukuda)

Talk about scraping the bottom of the barrel. Yes, Godzilla has a son. Yes, this mini-lizard plays hopscotch with his dad's tail, and no, this is not amusing in any way, shape or form. Just awful. ★★★★★

Godzilla Vs Hedorah (1973, Yoshimitsu Banno)

Also known as *Godzilla Vs The Smog Monster*, this is an odd anti-pollutant movie (complete with a theme song about saving the Earth) with the green gargantuan fighting against a sewage monster. Maybe worth enduring just for the sight of Godzilla flying (!). ★★★★★

Terror Of Mechagodzilla (1975, Ishirō Honda)

The final bow of the Shōwa era, and the swansong for Honda as well, this takes far too long to bring Godzilla into the mix – although die-hard kaiju devotees might enjoy the concluding carnage. ★★★★★

As more movies were made, more monstrous adversaries were created for Godzilla to face off against.

"THERE'S A LEVEL OF CRAFT AND CARE IN THESE FILMS WHICH WOULD SURPRISE PEOPLE WHO WERE WATCHING THE AMERICAN B-MOVIES OF THE TIME" JD LEES

nuclear devastation. It also introduced Haruo Nakajima as the man in the monster suit (although some shots were created with his co-star Katsumi Tezuka – who would also return to the role in later sequels). In all, Nakajima would portray the colossal creature in 11 additional *Godzilla* movies – braving his way through burns, bruises and other brutal experiences while bringing some much-needed character to the crazed critter. Special effects, meanwhile, including some excellent miniatures, were crafted on the watch of the late, great Eiji Tsuburaya – the genius responsible for the aesthetic wizardry of the original *Godzilla* series up until his death in 1970.

"Toho was a large studio, and they were very intricate about the staging of their effects and the preparation of the sets," continues Lees. "While the *Godzilla* films were made remarkably quickly compared to the average Hollywood release, the crew at Toho took more time on these movies than on any other Japanese production. There was a level of craft and care in these films which would perhaps surprise people who were watching the American B-movies of the time. *Godzilla* was not treated as some low-budget, Roger Corman-style monster movie."

In Japan, one in every nine people shelled out to experience *Godzilla* on the big screen. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Hollywood became curious about this box office sensation. Unfortunately, when the big green giant made his way to America in 1956, it was with an altered version of his metropolis-munching masterwork entitled *Godzilla: King Of The Monsters*. New English language footage was inserted into this edition, directed by journeyman filmmaker Terry O Morse and featuring Canadian actor Raymond Burr as an expat Stateside journalist who becomes unwittingly involved in the Godzilla disaster. Burr's narration covers up some holes in the plot, but the Americanisation of the feature also removes the nuclear element, as well as a central – if not entirely vital – sub-plot involving a love affair and a forced marriage. The end result takes a rather mature monster mash-up and makes it more akin to an innocently intentioned children's film.

"Looking at the American version of *Godzilla* almost 60 years later, it is easy to dismiss it as a watered-down version of the original," admits Jim Ballard, the English expat behind the Gaijin Channel and producer of a web series that specialises in investigating the roots of Japanese sci-fi. "However, when you consider the American version was released at a time when there was still a lot of post-war prejudice towards Japan, I think everyone involved did an incredible job of bringing Godzilla to a Western audience. It showed American audiences that the Japanese were real human beings and not warmongering barbarians. That aspect alone, I think, gives the American version a special place in history."

Ultimately, *Godzilla: King Of The Monsters* was a huge hit in America, although by the time it made its mark across the ocean it had quickly spawned its own genre. Dubbed 'kaiju' – meaning 'strange beast'

GODZILLA 1984-1995 MEGAREVIEW

Every Godzilla film of the Heisei period reviewed and rated

Godzilla 1985 (1984, Koji Hashimoto)

Also known as *Return Of Godzilla*, this is actually a worthy rebirth for the city-crunching colossus, even if, as many fans have pointed out, the rubber suit is less 'revamp' than 'same old, same old'. Still, there is plenty of fun to be had here, and the darker tone more or less hits the right notes. ★★★★☆

Godzilla Vs Biollante (1989, Kazuki Omori)

Creating a publicity boom for this long-delayed sequel, Toho allowed fans to enter ideas for the next instalment. The result of this is an all-new monster – the thoroughly bizarre Biollante. Unfortunately, this is less serious-minded than *Godzilla 1985*. ★★★☆☆

Godzilla Vs King Ghidorah (1991, Kazuki Omori)

An excellent, mind-frazzling, time-travelling oddity, this is an ambitious attempt to tell the genesis of Godzilla's story and even goes as far as destroying the beast (and then reinventing him from scratch). Not sure about the creature assisting the Japanese army, though. ★★★★☆

Godzilla And Mothra: The Battle For Earth (1992, Takao Okawara)

A decent enough, sort-of remake of the Shōwa series highlight *Godzilla Vs Mothra*. This would ultimately go on to prove to be successful enough to launch Mothra as the star of her own standalone trilogy of movies. ★★★☆☆

Godzilla Vs Mechagodzilla II (1993, Takao Okawara)

The return of an old favourite, albeit with a new and improved robo-suit, this is probably the point in the Heisei series when it became clear Toho was running on empty. This is not too dissimilar from the old *Mechagodzilla* movies – but then why change a winning formula? ★★★☆☆

Godzilla Vs SpaceGodzilla (1994, Kensho Yamashita)

It's hard to make head nor tails out of this – including the thoroughly cluttered explanation for the birth of SpaceGodzilla. Son of Godzilla gets kidnapped in this moronic monster-mash, prompting dad to come to the rescue. ★★☆☆☆

Godzilla Vs Destoroyah (1995, Koji Hashimoto)

Caused controversy at the time because Godzilla actually dies. It introduced a fast-deteriorating fire-breather, now in a condition of nuclear meltdown, thus threatening the safety of the planet. Off-kilter and unusual, this is well worth seeking out. ★★★☆☆

– all number of audacious ogres were suddenly unleashed into Japanese cinemas. Honda himself was called back by Toho to take on the directorial reigns of classics such as *Abominable Snowman* (1955), *Rodan, Giant Monster Of The Sky* (1956), *The Mysterians* (1957) and many more. Ironically, Honda's demanding diary meant that he had to sit out on the sequel to his greatest achievement – 1955's *Godzilla Raids Again*, a rather flimsy follow-up which nevertheless scored big with fans. This said, *Godzilla Raids Again* indicates the genesis of a series and what is known to fans as the Shōwa period – the timeline which stretches until the final franchise entry, *Terror Of Mechagodzilla*, in 1975. In Japan, Shōwa means 'period of enlightened peace' – an ironic title given the gregarious cinematic obliteration of Tokyo.

"The Shōwa era has so many classics that it is hard for me to choose one favourite," admits Ballard. "But I guess I would go for *Mothra Vs Godzilla* – a beautifully shot fantasy film with a great cast of characters. It also features what is perhaps my favourite portrayal of Godzilla as an unstoppable juggernaut."

Interestingly, following *Godzilla Raids Again* the decision was taken at Toho to capitalise on the new craze in cinemascope movies, which were then taking America by storm. As such, Godzilla – who was well served by the sinister noir-style shadows and cityscapes which the monochrome approach provided – was brought to life in eye-bleeding colour with *King Kong Vs Godzilla*. Presented in 'Tohoscope', the costumes may have looked like, well, blokes in fancy dress when exposed in all their lavish ludicrousness, but the overall production design, as well as the recreation of Tokyo and various other miniature special effects, were well served by this new technical approach. Indeed, seen in all their widescreen glory, key classics such as *King Kong Vs Godzilla* and 1964's magnificent *Mothra Vs Godzilla* – in which our man battles a giant moth – hold up as some of the most beautifully presented monster movies in screen history.

"I think that one way of becoming aware of how special these movies are is to take a look at some of the films which tried to imitate them during the Shōwa period – most of which are rightly forgotten about," claims Lees. "I think that the other thing that added to the quality was the Japanese fondness for extravagant imagery and presentation – they really pay attention to backdrops, set dressing and lighting. I think you can see that care for detail in other aspects of Japanese culture such as their food presentation, their advertising methods and their comic-books. They have a huge team psychology behind these films, too – they were more collaborative than Hollywood movies, so different talents made significant contributions. These were not just the result of one man's vision. If someone still needs proof about how great some of the effects were, look at Mothra. That was just a marionette, not someone in a costume, and yet they created a lifelike creature which you really cared about – quite an accomplishment considering it was just a big puppet!"

Furthermore, by *Godzilla Vs Mothra*, a formula was in evidence. Basically, the return of Godzilla creates mass panic, the military haplessly try to mount a defence, another monster does battle with the green gargantuan and, in the process, lots of buildings are destroyed. Clearly aiming for a family audience,

Inevitably, as the franchise expanded, the situations became ever more ludicrous, with the likes of *King Kong Vs Godzilla* being a direct byproduct.

though, the lingering on any human death is avoided. Going one step further in diluting the character's menace, 1964's *Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster* would conclude with Godzilla teaming up with the winged beast Rodan (at the request of Mothra) to destroy a nemesis who is considered to be a huge threat to humankind. While this involves a fantastic final fight, it also makes Godzilla a rather unexpected force for good. Consequently, in subsequent sequels such as 1965's *Invasion Of Astro-Monster*, in which Godzilla is sent to save some space-humans from an attack by Ghidorah, and the slapstick *Son Of Godzilla* (1967), the previously foreboding fire-breather was turned into little more than crummy comedy relief.

"I can sort of understand why he was given a little son called Minilla," chuckles Lees. "Toho's perception was that Godzilla had to be more and more accessible to very young kids, because that is where the box office was. I suppose I can appreciate that. I mean, I think making them more serious and bloody would have just cut the child audience out of things entirely, so a return to the theme and tone of the original movie would have been unwise. In fairness to Toho, they did back off from the whole 'son of Godzilla' thing when they realised they were going a bit too far with it. I do think that one of the reasons it splits fandom is that some the die-hards – as grown adults with families of their own – may be a tiny bit embarrassed to be discussing a movie series which has these childlike elements in there." Unfortunately though, the damage was more or less done.

Despite a few late-in-the-day highlights, such as the Ishirō Honda-helmed *Destroy All Monsters* (1968), Japan's most famous filmic fiend was on his last legs. Honda would return to his hit property with 1975's Shōwa swansong *Terror Of Mechagodzilla*, but with the passing of effects genius Eiji Tsuburaya (who had also created *Ultraman*), even the aesthetic pleasure of seeing some rubber-destruction was diminished.

"While I do think Godzilla works best as a terrifying monster, I also think that the Shōwa period added a tremendous amount of variety to the character," affirms Ballard. "I know that few fans would agree, but I would quite happily see Godzilla return as a hero one day."

For fans, though, it would take 1984's *Return Of Godzilla* (known in the west as *Godzilla 1985*) for him to make a comeback. This time he would be reinvented as a big, badass beast from beyond the sea – ready to trample Tokyo for the first time since 1964's *Ghidorah, The Three-Headed Monster*.

Few places have suffered the wrath of the giant green lizard as much as Tokyo.

"Toho had always planned on bringing Godzilla back," reveals Lees. "But they had to decide when the time was right to do so. *Star Wars* had been released, and that really sent the sci-fi and fantasy genre in a different direction. It was at that point Toho began to wonder if Godzilla had any future at all. So in 1980 they did a re-release of *Mothra Vs Godzilla* – which was a huge hit. Then they tested the waters a little further by doing a film festival dedicated to Godzilla. That was in 1983, and the reception to it was fantastic, so they decided to go ahead with a new movie after all."

Released in the US by Roger Corman's New World Pictures, where it did only middling business, *Godzilla 1985* also has the ironic distinction of suffering the same schlock-treatment that stifled the original 1954 movie. For the first time in 30 years, Raymond Burr was brought back to the *Godzilla* universe – once more playing a bamboozled reporter who 'narrates' the action for subtitle-phobic Americans. Thankfully, the Burr version of *Godzilla 1985* was kept to US soil, although this direct sequel was met with a decidedly mixed critical reception upon its release.

Based on the idea that Godzilla was vanquished at the close of the 1954 fable, this long-delayed return to the character's darker roots is played with monotone seriousness and tries to build up some degree of suspense. Alas, despite a much-mooted animatronic head, provided for close-up shots of the marauding

monster, the old rubber suit remains. This leads to an odd mix between kitsch and contemporary – with some sublime set pieces and straight-faced thespian turns, supported by the same plastic-fantastic protagonist who was last seen in the pre-*Star Wars* world of the early Seventies.

"*Godzilla 1985* was the first film since the original to feature the character without any other monsters fighting him," enthuses Ballard. "I think it did its best in reintroducing Godzilla as a menacing force of nature. It also draws on the original film's anti-nuclear message – with a Russian missile on route to Japan to destroy Godzilla. Unfortunately, *Godzilla 1985* was widely criticised as a rather slow and dull affair, although I think it is quite underrated."

At the very least, *Godzilla 1985* was the best movie for the munch-happy marauder since *Destroy All Monsters* in 1969. It was also an attempt to birth a new chapter – known as 'the Heisei period' (meaning 'peace everywhere' – a reference to the period begat by Japan's Emperor Akihito).

"After *Godzilla 1985* we had to wait five years before the next entry in the Heisei series – *Godzilla Vs Biollante* – but it brought about dramatic changes and some particularly impressive technical innovations," continues Ballard. "But as the Heisei series progressed, it was marred by clumsy screenwriting, and the special effects innovations made in *Godzilla Vs Biollante* were lost to apathy. For me, it was an era full of great ideas that were never properly realised."

Certainly paling in comparison to the heady first few years of the Shõwa era, the new Godzilla was often placed in ridiculous situations (such as 1994's nadir of *Godzilla Vs SpaceGodzilla*), although the films insisted on maintaining some semblance of seriousness. The result was largely hit and miss – but, in fairness, 1995's conclusive *Godzilla Vs Destoroyah* boasted arguably the best special effects to date and an explosive end for the rubber reptile – turned into a big, gooey pile of lizard-plasma. It was a fitting tribute to the terror-titan that, post-*Godzilla Vs Destoroyah*, Hollywood was knocking at Toho's doors with the promise of a new, massively budgeted blockbuster – a summer shocker that was designed to reinvent the icon into a 21st Century merchandise-monster… well, that was the plan, anyway.

"I remember wondering what some of the great special effects talents in Hollywood could do with Godzilla," admits Lees. "So when it was announced that we would see a Roland Emmerich version of the character it was very exciting, especially to fans, because we would finally see what could be done with Godzilla if money was not an issue."

Alas, the Roland Emmerich-directed epic was more *Jurassic Park* than *Godzilla*, telling of a huge T-Rex aimlessly stomping around New York. This would not be especially bad if it was even half as interesting as Steven Spielberg's dinosaur movie – but Emmerich does nothing with the premise. The behemoth gatecrashes the Big Apple, flees from the army, hides from

"MARRED BY INCREASINGLY CLUMSY SCREENWRITING, THE SPECIAL EFFECTS INNOVATIONS WHICH WERE MADE IN GODZILLA VS BIOLLANTE WERE LOST TO APATHY" JIM BALLARD

GODZILLA 1999-2004 MEGAREVIEW

Every Godzilla film of the Millennium period reviewed and rated

Godzilla 2000 (1999, Takao Okawara)

Old hand Okawara returns (he helmed a couple of the Heisei titles) for the first Japanese *Godzilla* movie to gain a US theatrical spin in 15 years. This is also the first film – outside of the American disaster – to recreate Godzilla with CGI (although the rubber suit is back). All in, this is a bit too long and laborious, but it has its moments.

★★★½☆

Godzilla Vs Megaguirus (2000, Masaaki Tezuka)

This outing ignores the events of the last film and pushes things even further into sci-fi territory. However, with a plot that makes room for everything from kamikaze pilots to an outstanding attack on Tokyo at the film's end, there's plenty going on, and it rarely pauses for breath.

★★★½☆

Godzilla, Mothra And King Ghidorah: Giant Monsters All-Out Attack (2001, Shusuke Kaneko)

A not-bad critter-clobbering epic which nonetheless far too often derails from the action (we do not need to see an old doomsday philosopher in a cave), but when we get to see all of the title titans smash each other up the pace is suitably picked up.

★★★½☆

Godzilla Against Mechagodzilla (2002, Masaaki Tezuka)

Marks the return of an old favourite, but this instalment baffles the lineage of the character by indicating that Godzilla died in 1954 and has been rebuilt as Mechagodzilla by the military. The reason? A new giant-lizard has arisen. Confusing and confused.

★★☆☆☆

Godzilla: Tokyo SOS (2003, Masaaki Tezuka)

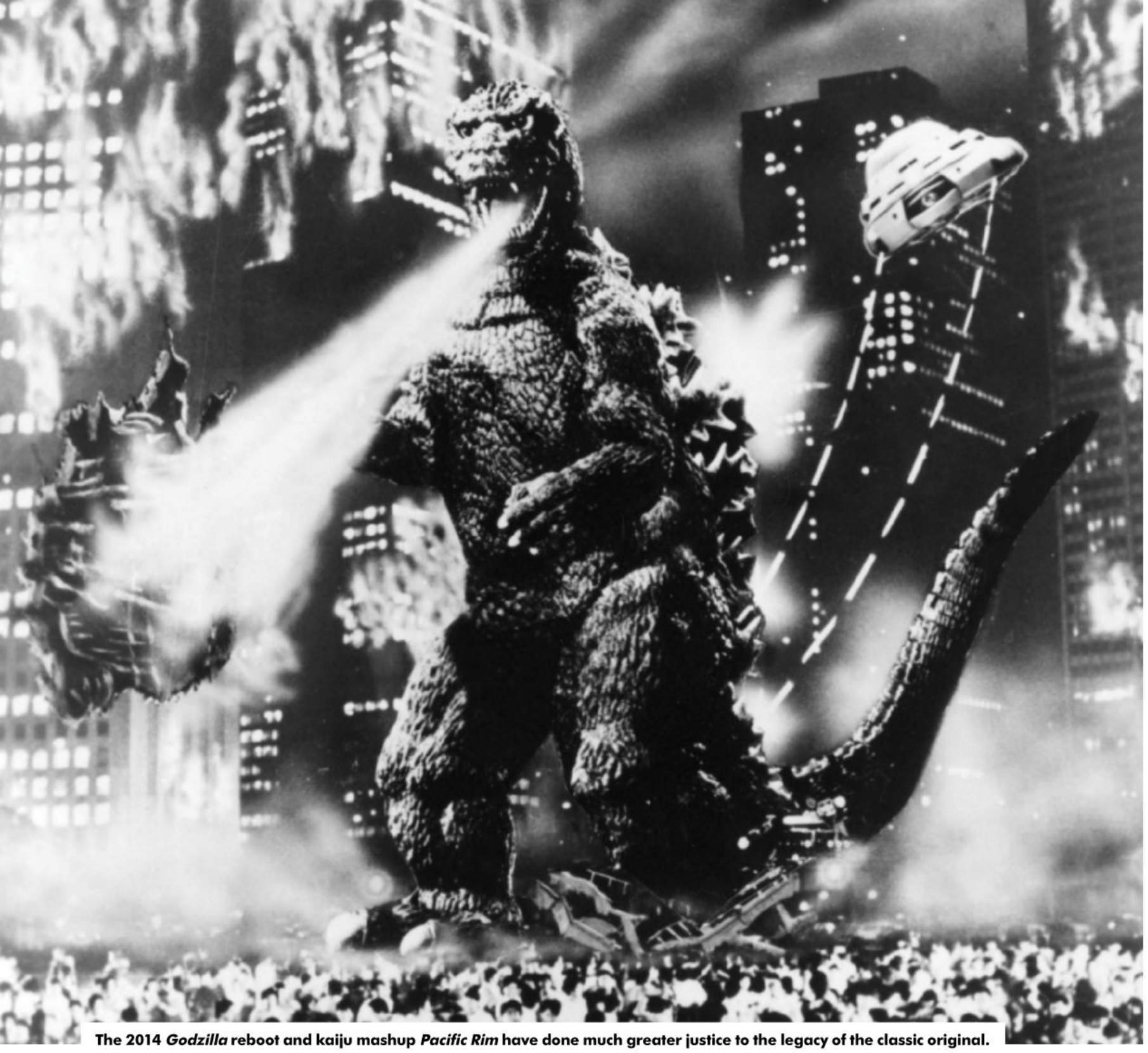
A direct sequel to *Godzilla Against Mechagodzilla,* this brings back Mothra as well, and effectively just lets the beasts bludgeon one another. The same formula as usual applies, but even with improved special effects the Millennium series was evidently struggling to win sufficient new followers.

★★★½☆

Godzilla: Final Wars (2004, Ryuhei Kitamura)

To date the final of the Japanese *Godzilla* movies, this is far too hyperactive and choppily edited to really pass as a 'good' movie, but in its defence, everything but the kitchen sink is thrown at the screen, including an amazing scene in which American Godzilla is trashed by Japanese Godzilla. Awesome.

★★★½☆



The 2014 *Godzilla* reboot and kaiju mashup *Pacific Rim* have done much greater justice to the legacy of the classic original.

view, lays some eggs… and that's about it. Neither the tone of the film, nor its monster, has anything in common with the Toho Godzilla (who never retreats from a fight) and, to add insult to injury, the Emmerich outing is really, *really* boring.

"The film was made by people who neither understood, nor had any interest in understanding, the films which came before it," states Ballard. "The filmmakers themselves were quite vocal about this while promoting the movie, with Emmerich stating he gave up trying to watch the Toho movies because they were 'all the same.' The FX director, Volker Engel, was also quoted as saying Toho's Godzilla was just 'a fat guy in a rubber suit.' But, oddly enough, *Godzilla: The Series* served as an animated sequel to Emmerich's film, and is actually much more true to the character. Unlike the movie which preceded it, many of the staff for the cartoon were big *Godzilla* fans, so they brought many hallmarks of the classic Toho films to the forefront."

So it was, then, that Toho decided to instigate an all-new *Godzilla* franchise – known as the Millennium series. Beginning with *Godzilla 2000*, this was an above-average, if not ideal, reinvention which – at the very least – eliminated the sour taste that had been left by the American atrocity. Now featuring a slew of CGI, but retaining the rubber costume (albeit now looking better than ever), *Godzilla 2000* led to five sequels – climaxing with 2004's *Godzilla: Final Wars*. This time, though, the character was not killed, and the Millennium mythology came to a natural close due to a desire on Toho's part to celebrate the creature's 50th anniversary. After this, in light of dwindling box office receipts, the studio decided to give its scaly superstar some time off.

"Toho desperately wanted a final celebration for Godzilla, and they got that with 2004's *Final Wars*," says Lees. "They hired a hip director in Ryuhei Kitamura, who had made *Versus* and *Azumi*, and gave him free reign. They also spent more money than they ever had done before and hoped for the best. Although I think that the final film was a disappointment, it was at least a face-saving end for Toho: they got their opening at Grauman's Chinese Theatre, and that attracted a fair bit of media attention too. Having a 50th anniversary for Godzilla was important to them."

As such, fans had to wait for Gareth Edwards, the man behind the critically acclaimed sci-fi romance *Monsters*, to bring Godzilla back to the screen. While some celebrated the darker screenplay from Max Borenstein and generally more serious tone, others felt that the film didn't cover the same political ground that Godzilla movies have traditionally trodden. Given the anti-nuclear, anti-invasion and occasionally anti-corporate ideologies of the *Godzilla* legacy (in which hierarchies are commonly shown to be as monstrous as the Tokyo-trashing giant lizard), Edwards' reboot didn't quite match up to its predecessors thematically.

"I think that Guillermo del Toro's homage to kaiju, *Pacific Rim*, sounds like it might be more fun than the new *Godzilla*," mentions Lees. "The fans need to think critically about what an American *Godzilla* means. Edwards has said it is going to be gritty and realistic, and that he is approaching it as 'what it would be like if Godzilla actually existed in our world?' Well, you can make a movie like that, but I do not think it will be a true franchise creation or have anything to do with Godzilla. So this might well be another case of 'be careful what you wish for.'"

Even so, if Godzilla's future is in America – and on the packaging of tie-in toys – then so be it. At the very least, the true lover of the giant lizard has five decade's worth of destruction to wallow in. While Evans has succeeded in bringing something quintessentially Japanese to America with great success – a sequel to the recent reboot is already scheduled for 2018 – we suspect that, somewhere in Tokyo, Toho are once again planning to reinvent a national icon for yet another generation of creature feature fanatics.

THAT FIRST AMERICAN REMAKE…

So where do we place the Roland Emmerich blockbuster in the mythology of all things Godzilla? According to an in-joke which appears in *Godzilla Vs Megaguirus*, America was invaded by a monster in 1998, but Japanese authorities "deny it was Godzilla." Moreover, in *Godzilla: Final Wars*, the American version of the beast appears, only to be smashed into the Sydney Opera House – and immediately killed – by the real deal. Obviously, Toho was miffed at the massacre-job done to their beloved behemoth and, for those who are curious, the US-take on the toothsome terror is undoubtedly one of the worst summer movies ever inflicted on the general public. It's so bad, in fact, that we would rather watch *Son Of Godzilla* again – and that is saying something.

GODZILLA ON DVD

The buyer's guide to the behemoth

Unfortunately for any aspiring UK Godzilla expert, you're going to need to look abroad for your fix of kaiju craziness. Currently, the original film can be had on DVD from the BFI, and a badly dubbed – but nevertheless widescreen – edition of *King Kong Vs Godzilla* is available on disc as well. Aside from that and the Emmerich remake, you're stuffed. But the good news is that a region free Blu-ray of the 1954 classic is available in America – complete with some interesting extra features. We strongly advise importing this, alongside Classic Media's *The Godzilla Collection* (DVD only, region 1, original Japanese language) which offers *Godzilla* (1954), *Godzilla Raids Again*, *Mothra Vs Godzilla*, *Ghidorah, The Three Headed Monster*, *Invasion Of Astro-Monster*, the stinky *All Monsters Attack* and *Terror Of Mechagodzilla*. The rest of the Shōwa series can be imported from Australia and in dribs and drabs in long-deleted American discs (dubbed into English). For the Heisei period you will need to look to Japan or Hong Kong for a complete collection. We recommend www.dddhouse.com for cheap deals on this lot. Thankfully, things are a lot easier for the Millennium series, with Media Blasters in the USA giving each title a worthy DVD spin. Finally, there are two animated series – *Godzilla The Original Animated Series* (which introduced Godzuki AKA animated Son of Godzilla), this can be found on region one disc, and the post-Emmerich cartoon, which has been largely ignored, on home video. Those who are curious, though, can see three episodes on the special edition DVD of the 1998 *Godzilla*.

The First Doctor

We first meet the Doctor, and his granddaughter, Susan, in London in 1963, where his TARDIS has become stuck in the shape of a British Police Call Box. All that we know about him is that he comes from "another time, another world...". The TARDIS's first trip to another planet takes the time-travellers to Skaro, where the Doctor encounters the Daleks for the very first time...

William Hartnell (1963-66)

The Second Doctor

At the end of the Doctor's first encounter with the Cybermen, he declared that his old body was "wearing a bit thin" and, before the astonished eyes of his companions, transformed his appearance. The new Doctor had an elfin face with a Beatles haircut. Often far less serious than his former self had been, his wit hid a formidable intelligence. At the end of one epic adventure he discovered that he needed to call on the help of his own people, the Time Lords.

Patrick Troughton (1966-69)

The Third Doctor

Exiled to Earth by the Time Lords, the third Doctor acquired a taste for fancy clothes – ruffled shirts, capes and bow ties. Earthbound for much of his time, he teamed up with UNIT to assist with the attacks and invasions that Earth now faced in the later part of the 20th Century. His visit to Metabilis III bought him into conflict with the Giant Spiders, and although triumphant, his body was riddled with deadly radiation.

Jon Pertwee (1970-74)

THE DOCTORS: A

The Seventh Doctor

More comic in appearance than his other selves, a dark side to the Doctor's character began to emerge. Links to Gallifrey's dark history seemed to crop up around him, with hints that he was more than just a Time Lord. Sent alone on a final mission by the Time Lords, he retrieved the remains of his old foe, the Master, from the clutches of the Daleks. Only the Master wasn't quite dead...

Sylvester McCoy (1987-96)

The Eighth Doctor

The eighth Doctor cut something of a Byron-esque figure, with his flowing hair, cravat, waistcoat and long velvet jacket. He claimed to be half human on his mother's side, but perhaps this could be put down to his post-regenerative instability. After defeating the Master's deadly plans at the dawn of the new Millennium, the Doctor quickly left Earth, heading into time and space in his trusty TARDIS, for adventures in who knows where.

Paul McGann (1996)

The Ninth Doctor

Born in the wake of a John Hurt-shaped War Doctor, the origins of Ecclestone's character were murky until the show's fiftieth anniversary special. After many adventures with his companion, Rose Tyler, he discovered that the Daleks had cheated their final end, and were plotting to invade Earth. Rose saved the day, leaving it up to the Doctor to save her, but at the cost of his own ninth life.

Christopher Eccleston (2005)

The Fourth Doctor

The fourth Doctor was far more eccentric than any of his predecessors. Dressed in a shabby, bohemian style, with velvet coat and unfeasibly long multi-coloured scarf, the Doctor had an air of authority and aloofness that sometimes baffled those around him. Alongside numerous female assistants, he was also joined by K9, the mobile dog-shaped computer. His epic battle with the Master saw the Doctor fall to his doom.

Tom Baker (1974-81)

The Fifth Doctor

The youthful fifth Doctor tended to come across as an old man trapped in a young man's body. Fixated with cricket, and with a sprig of celery on his lapel, the Doctor somehow now seemed a little less sure of himself.. A visit to Androzani Minor cut his travels short. Both he, and his companion Peri, received a fatal dose of the raw drug Spectrox, and with only enough antidote to save one of them, the Doctor made the supreme sacrifice.

Peter Davison (1981-84)

The Sixth Doctor

A troubled regeneration led to a sixth Doctor who was more prone to violent mood swings. Loud and brash, the Doctor occasionally solved problems in a more physical manner than he had previously. He was put on trial again by his own people, but this time he managed to get off all the charges. However, an ambush by the Rani left the Doctor badly injured, triggering a regeneration.

Colin Baker (1984-86)

BEGINNER'S GUIDE

The Tenth Doctor

Deceptively young, thin, with big hair, and with a mole on his back, the tenth Doctor cuts a suave figure, with his natty suit, trainers, and long brown jacket. He shares with a number of his predecessors the ability to switch between laconic buffoonery and deadly sincerity at the drop of a hat. With his end drawing near, the Tenth Doctor travels alone before facing his fate, along with the Master

David Tennant (2005 – 2010)

The Eleventh Doctor

While the Ninth and Tenth came into the world in a South London estate, the Eleventh walked into the life of Amy Pond in rural Leadworth. It wasn't just the location that was a nod to the past, the Tenth echoed the dress of the Second, and matched the Tenth's adventurism with the Second's grumpiness. His end, coming as it did alongside Daleks, Zygons and the return of his Tenth incarnation was a spectacular moment...

Matt Smith (2010 – 2013)

The Twelfth Doctor

The Twelfth Doctor was a significant departure for those who'd grown up with the boyish charms of the Tenth and Eleventh incarnations. Peter Capaldi's take on the character is harsher and more brusque than his predecessors, his Doctor less concerned with winning the affection of those around him, all of which has led to some of the darkest and most complex episodes in the show's history.

Peter Capaldi (2013 – present)

THE DEFINITIVE DOCTOR

HE WAS THE FIRST TO WEAR THE SCARF. HE HAD A ROBOTIC DOG, A YO-YO, AND A BAG OF JELLY BABIES. HE WASN'T THE FIRST DOCTOR – BUT HE WAS THE MOST FAMOUS. HE WAS THERE FOR THE SHOW'S HIGHS, AND ITS LOWS. HE IS THE DOCTOR. HE IS TOM BAKER

20

THE DOCTOR

Time Lord hero of Doctor Who, the longest-running BBC science fiction series, The Doctor is now in his 12th incarnation, played by Peter Capaldi

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ The Doctor is a British institution. His true identity is shrouded in secrecy and each actor to play the role has brought something new to the character. The eccentric alien travels with a companion in his spaceship, the TARDIS – famously bigger on the inside than the outside.

The Doctor is fiercely protective of all life but never uses a weapon, just his trusty sonic screwdriver. He has a soft spot for Earth and has saved humanity from threats such as the Daleks, Cybermen and Autons on numerous occasions. Russell T Davies revived the series from its indefinite hiatus in 2005 with a Doctor scarred by the events of a great Time War between his people the Time Lords and the Daleks. He is now the last of his kind.

DOCTOR WHO: THE 4TH DOCTOR TIME CAPSULE is available on DVD from 2Entertain priced £61.68.

Tom Baker played the Doctor for seven seasons – from 1974 to 1981. In those years, he successfully re-defined both the character and the series. Thanks to him, long scarves, floppy hats and jelly babies became as synonymous with *Doctor Who* as police boxes and really lame monsters.

The first three Doctors were all boffins: Hartnell had been the wise, old grumpy one; Troughton the dotty trickster, and Pertwee the dashing, heroic, father figure. Baker, on the other hand, was a benevolent alien; encompassing all of his predecessors as the wise-grumpy-dotty-dashing-heroic-fatherly-old-young one, and that's what the Doctor has been ever since.

Such was Baker's iconic status, his retirement from the role in 1981 was to prove problematic for the show, having made the role his own. He would prove a nigh-on impossible act to follow: Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy tried too hard to be Tom; and Peter Davison tried too hard not to be Tom. Even the new generation arguably can't quite seem to escape from out of his shadow, as highlighted by the *Radio Times* advertising the 2005 Christmas special – David Tennant's debut – with a cartoon snowman wearing a floppy hat and a long scarf…

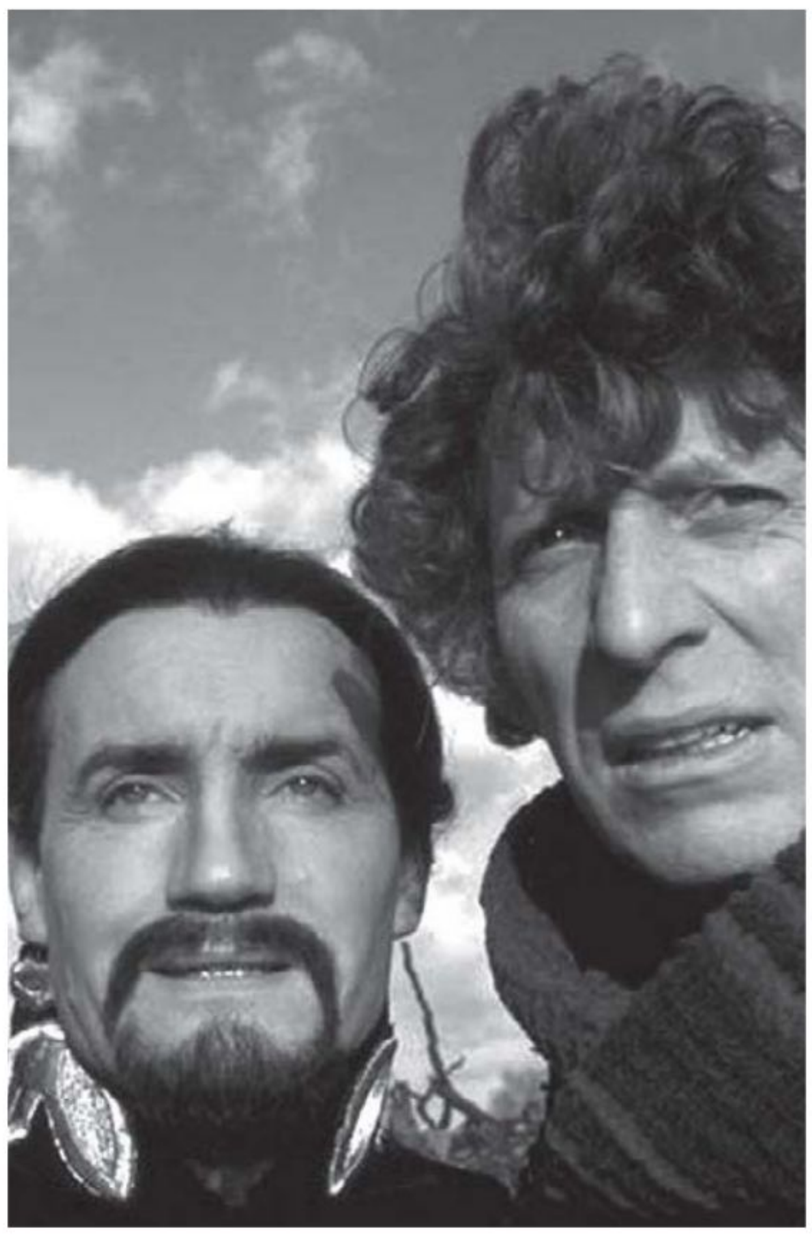
Tom Baker *is* the Doctor. But at times, the Doctor seems to have supplanted Tom Baker. The stories told of his early life are legendary: of the young lad working as an alter boy, finding that he got better tips if he burst into tears at strangers' funerals. The novice in the monastery told to keep his eyes down at all times, and getting crushes on other boys' feet. The useless soldier who found that if you pretended to be a complete moron, you could get away with practically anything. The young actor, who found there was no shortage of pretty women happy to go to bed with the wearer of the famous scarf. The old actor purchasing his own grave (complete with headstone), and watching a fan put flowers on it. True stories? Who knows? But they could all easily have been incidents in the life of the fourth Doctor.

William Hartnell claimed to have been followed around by small children, like the Pied Piper. Patrick Troughton never made a single public appearance, as he thought it would spoil the magic. But Tom felt that it was part of his job to make the Doctor available to viewers – not only on Saturday TV, but also in real life. Small boys queued to sit on his knee at an endless succession of village fetes; hundreds of visitors to the *Doctor Who* exhibition in Blackpool received (courtesy of a dedicated secretary and a meticulous filing system) a birthday card that he himself had personally signed.

Did he really turn up at a school to deliver a gentle warning to some bullies, and comfort their victim? Did he knock on the door of a random family and ask if he could watch *Doctor Who* with them – leaving the kids with a fantastic story that no-one would ever believe? And even

"TOM FELT THAT IT WAS PART OF HIS JOB TO MAKE THE DOCTOR AVAILABLE TO VIEWERS IN REAL LIFE"

The iconic hat and scarf became synonymous with the character.



With his adversary, the Master, played by Geoffrey Beevers.

THE WIT AND WISDOM OF THE FOURTH DOCTOR

THE FOURTH DOCTOR WAS MANY THINGS… AND SOME OF TV'S BEST EVER WRITERS (TERRY NATION, ROBERT HOLMES, DOUGLAS ADAMS) PUT WORDS INTO HIS MOUTH:

WANDERER

"Why didn't he ask someone who saw it happen?" (Reading a book on The Origin of the Universe)

Destiny Of The Daleks

NAME DROPPER

"Where did I learn to shoot like that?
In Switzerland. Charming man. William Tell, he was called."

Face Of Evil

"Old Isaac? Friend of mine on Earth. He discovered gravity. Well, I say he discovered gravity. I had to give him a bit of a prod. I climbed up a tree, and dropped an apple on his head… "

Pirate Planet

PHILOSOPHER

"The very powerful and the very stupid have one thing in common. They don't alter their views to fit the facts. They alter the facts to fit their views. Which can be uncomfortable if you happen to be one of the facts that needs altering."

Face Of Evil

"If someone who knew the future pointed out a child to you and told you that that child would grow up totally evil, to be a ruthless dictator who would destroy millions of lives… could you then kill that child?"

Genesis Of The Daleks

COMEDIAN

"I can see your long rest hasn't done anything to cure your megalomania. Have a jelly baby."

Genesis Of The Daleks

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE FOURTH DOCTOR

THE TOM BAKER STORY

When Tom Baker became the Doctor, he was unknown to the public. He was – as the papers of the day gleefully reported – discovered working on a building site, but that was only because jobbing actors often have to take day jobs while they are 'resting'.

In fact, Tom had trod the boards of the National Theatre as a protege of Laurence Olivier, who had recommended him to the legendary Italian director Paolo Pasolini, who in turn cast him in his adaptation of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (devoted fans may like to track down this art-house flick if only because parts of Tom which are usually not on public display feature prominently). He appeared with Olivier again as the mad monk Rasputin in *Nicholas And Alexandra*, and was also the villain in Ray Harryhausen's monster flick *The Golden Voyage Of Sinbad*.

Tom's casting in *Doctor Who* was a parting gift to the show by long time producer Barry Letts. Several of Tom's early yarns (such as 'Robot', 'Terror Of The Zygons' and 'Seeds Of Death') could have passed for Jon Pertwee stories: mad scientists, earth invasions, trigger happy UNIT soldiers, and the Brigadier himself. But Tom put his stamp on the show very quickly; you can imagine Jon Pertwee saving the last humans from alien parasites (in 'Ark In Space'), but you can't imagine him raising his hands and making a speech about how inventive and indomitable homo sapiens are.

But it was Seasons 13 and 14 that defined the Baker era. Philip Hinchcliffe became producer, and veteran writer Robert Holmes was made script editor. Some fans cringed as the series metamorphosed into a dark, gothic horror show. They raged as the established back story was ignored, mocked or contradicted. Mary Whitehouse fretted that it was now far too frightening for kids. But Baker still turned out week after week of genre-defining performances – imitating Sherlock Holmes in 'Talons Of Weng Chiang', facing down an evil god in 'Pyramids Of Mars', and being trapped in a surreal virtual reality called the Matrix (hmm…) in 'Deadly Assassin'.

Tom Baker's interpretation of the Time Lord has influenced all that have followed.

Tom said that the role of the Doctor involved nothing more than talking gobbledegook with complete conviction (mischievously adding that his Catholic background gave him a good grounding in this). Certainly, the Doctor of the Hinchcliffe era is played dead straight; if he tells you that the universe is in mortal danger, you jolly well believe him. He wasn't averse to offering someone a jelly baby as if it was gravely important, and then casually adding that the world was about to end. Most importantly, he brought his own surreal humour to the part, shamelessly adding jokes which weren't in the script.

He often said that he wished *Doctor Who* could have been weirder and more surreal. (Why couldn't there be a herd of sheep in the TARDIS? Why couldn't the Cybermen become obsessed with ballroom dancing?) In Seasons 16 and 17 he started to get his wish. Incoming producer Graham Williams bowed to pressure to make the show less violent, and made it sillier and sillier. Script editor Douglas Adams – who went on to achieve fame as the author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* – supplied Tom not only with some classic one-liners, but also a robot dog and a Time Lady companion who were capable of being as clever and silly as he was. Whereas past companions like Sarah-Jane Smith and Leela had provided more sane, downbeat contrasts to Tom's mad exuberance. K-9 and Romana always seemed to be trying to out-weird the Doctor.

However, Tom's foolery created a downward spiral: the scripts became sillier and sillier, Baker became more and more over-the-top, and the monsters became more and more risible. Everyone – including, arguably, the viewers – were having fun, but no-one, least of all Tom, was taking it seriously any more.

When John Nathan-Turner took over the producer's chair, he tried to rein Tom in; make him stick to the script; play a character, not a comic turn, and bring some gravitas back to the role. Perhaps inevitably, Tom hated it and offered his resignation. He was surprised at how readily it was accepted. These final stories depict Tom no longer as a clown, but again as a lonely, altruistic deity – quoting poetry, spouting pseudo-science, playing the friendly uncle to new boy Adric, and bequeathing this tone to the forthcoming Fifth Doctor's era. At the time it felt like a renaissance, and now stands as being as good as anything else in the show's history. But an old actor like Tom should have known better: if he'd quit slightly earlier (say, after Season 15), he'd have left the audience begging for more.

For many, Tom Baker will forever be the definitive Doctor.

Unlike Jon Pertwee, Tom Baker never enjoyed a career reinvention after *Doctor Who*.

"THERE WAS TO BE NO CAREER REINVENTION, A LA JON PERTWEE WITH WORZEL GUMMIDGE"

if he didn't, is there any other actor about who those kinds of stories could be told? Who sent the cards? Who was the visitor? An actor called Tom? Or a kindly alien called the Doctor?

Tom Baker was Doctor Who for seven years – 172 episodes, 48 stories – more than Matt Smith, David Tennant and Christopher Eccleston put together. But while the Doctor would eventually turn into Peter Davison, Tom Baker could never be anyone other than the Doctor. That's not to say there wasn't life after *Who*. In 2005 he was said to have the fourth most recognisable voice in England (after the Queen, Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair). There may even be some who associate that voice more with *Little Britain* (although if Walliams and Lucas hadn't been *Who* fans, he might never have landed the part). Tom once said that he should have lost his Equity card on the basis of his over-the-top guest appearance on *Blackadder* (as the ill-fated explorer Redbeard Rum), but you only have to say "Arrrr… you have a woman's bottom!" in a certain accent to make fans of a certain age collapse with laughter. But there was to be no career reinvention for Tom, a la Jon Pertwee with *Worzel Gummidge*. He would always be the funny, smiley one with the floppy hat and long scarf.

A few years ago we were privileged to interview Tom Baker. It was a long, rambling and funny meeting; he is generous with his time and memories. It felt as if we had been granted an audience with the Fourth Doctor himself. But it left us wondering: does the make up ever come off? Behind the laughter, the risque jokes and the endless theatrical anecdotes, is there a Tom Baker the world doesn't see? Maybe not. Perhaps the Catholic God he once believed in just put a force of nature on earth and called it Tom Baker. For a wonderful few years in the 1970s, that force found a perfect home in a daft old TV show called *Doctor Who* – but never really anywhere else.

We can regret the parts he should have played; notably the unspecified role in *The Lord Of The Rings*; rumoured to be Gandalf. It's a sad thought that if he'd torn himself away from his cottage – "my little paradise", as he calls it – it might've been Tom's voice shouting "You shall not pass" at the Balrog. But we'll always have those 48 DVDs. And when – hopefully not for years and years – he finally takes his place under that pre-purchased gravestone, we'll still be able to watch those mad, benevolent eyes of his staring out from that corridor on Skaro, holding the fate of the universe in his hands; the greatest scene in the greatest story in one of the greatest shows of all time.

DOCTOR WHO: THE MONSTERS COLLECTION
Daleks, Silurians, Davros, Cybermen, Sontarans and The Master are available on DVD from 2Entertain priced £7 each.

DOCTOR WHO VILLAINS

Daleks are just the beginning....

21
DALEKS

Race of genetically modified aliens in a deadly armour shell, created by Terry Nation, the Daleks had a burst of fame in the Sixties that eclipsed Doctor Who itself

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ DALEKS ARE synonymous with kids peering from behind the sofa and *Doctor Who*'s most beloved baddies. The trademark mechanical armour, eye stalk, gun and plunger-like manipulator arm have been constants in Dalek design since the Sixties and inside its shell lurks a repulsive creature, filled with hate and entirely ruthless.

Terry Nation drew from the Nazis when conceiving the Daleks, with their harsh, staccato tones barking anger and war to those unfortunate enough to cross their path. They are defined by a single word: 'Exterminate' – it's what they were bred for and all that they are, and the TV-watching public remains fascinated by them.

HE HAS HIS FANS BUT HE'S ALSO GOT HIS ENEMIES, MOST INFAMOUS AMONG THEM THE DALEKS. WITH A SET OF VILLAINS THAT WOULD IMPRESS EVEN THE MOST EXPERIENCED COMIC-BOOK SUPERHERO, DOCTOR WHO IS DEFINED AS MUCH BY HIS NEMESES AS IT BY ITS HERO...

"Doctor Who villains represent the kinds of things which we are scared of, but they also represent what we are all really scared of becoming"

"That's the way it has always been," says Reinette in 'The Girl In The Fireplace'. "The Doctor and the monsters. You cannot have one without the other." She knew what she was talking about, too. Ever since she was a little girl the terrible Clockwork Robots had been trying to kidnap her – for reasons she couldn't possibly have understood. But she was also speaking for the millions of viewers who grew up being terrified (in a good way) of *Doctor Who* monsters.

So it's odd to think that the one thing that series creator Sydney Newman really didn't want in his new science-fiction serial was 'BEMs' – bug-eyed monsters. Indeed, there's a distinct lack of '*Doctor Who* baddies' in that first black-and-white season. The Doctor wanders into a feud between two cave-men, who both want to rule their tribe. He's caught up in the midst of a religious disagreement between two Aztecs about whether or not human sacrifice is out of date. Alien Sensorites threaten the Doctor because they are scared of humans, but they end up parting on good terms. There are characters who do bad things, but few out-and-out villains.

In a way, this is even true of the Daleks, who were introduced in the fifth episode of the original series. They are, of course, as buggy and monstrous as they come. But to start with, they were also characters. A 1972 children's book called *The Making Of Doctor Who* sums it up pretty well: "Although the Daleks have given a lot of fun, it should be remembered that the story behind them is rather sad... They had once been quite different – perhaps as beautiful as the Thals, who also lived on their planet... Perhaps these are the reasons why the are always so unfeeling, cruel and violent. They hate every living thing which still has its own body. Above all they hate the Doctor because he has defeated them so many times."

It was a neutron war on the planet Skaro that mutated them into tin-can dwelling monsters – a war which had been started by the Thals (the Daleks' ancestors were wise teachers and philosophers, turned bad because of what the Thals did to them). In their 1963 incarnation, the Daleks actually need radiation to survive; they are going to irradiate their planet to make it habitable for them. Wiping out the Thals is almost incidental.

"But that's sheer murder!" exclaims the Doctor.

"No," replies the chief Dalek, "extermination." It's the only time the word is used in that first story.

The second time they appear, they've somehow acquired interstellar travel, and the desire to conquer planet Earth. They supposedly want to turn the planet into a spaceship, but one feels that this is writer Terry Nation's way of saying "Don't worry too much about the reasons – I just thought it would be cool to see Daleks trundling around London landmarks and pluck English heroes standing up to them." In their third appearance ('The Chase') all the Daleks want to do is kill the Doctor –

Every fan's dream came true in 2006, when the Daleks and the Cybermen had an all out ding-dong on Earth.

DALEK 101

A brief history of the Daleks

The Daleks are descended from the Kaleds of Skaro. They mutated into their present, nightmarish form as a result of radiation released in a devastating neutron war fought against the Thals, and genetic engineering by Davros.

When the Doctor first met them, the Daleks were still fighting the Thals for control of their home planet, but they rapidly broadened their horizons and decided to have a go at becoming supreme creatures in the universe.

Davros expunged the concept of 'pity' from his creations' minds, with the predictable result that they ended up exterminating him. He was later brought back to life, splitting the Daleks into two factions, one loyal to Davros, the other to the Emperor.

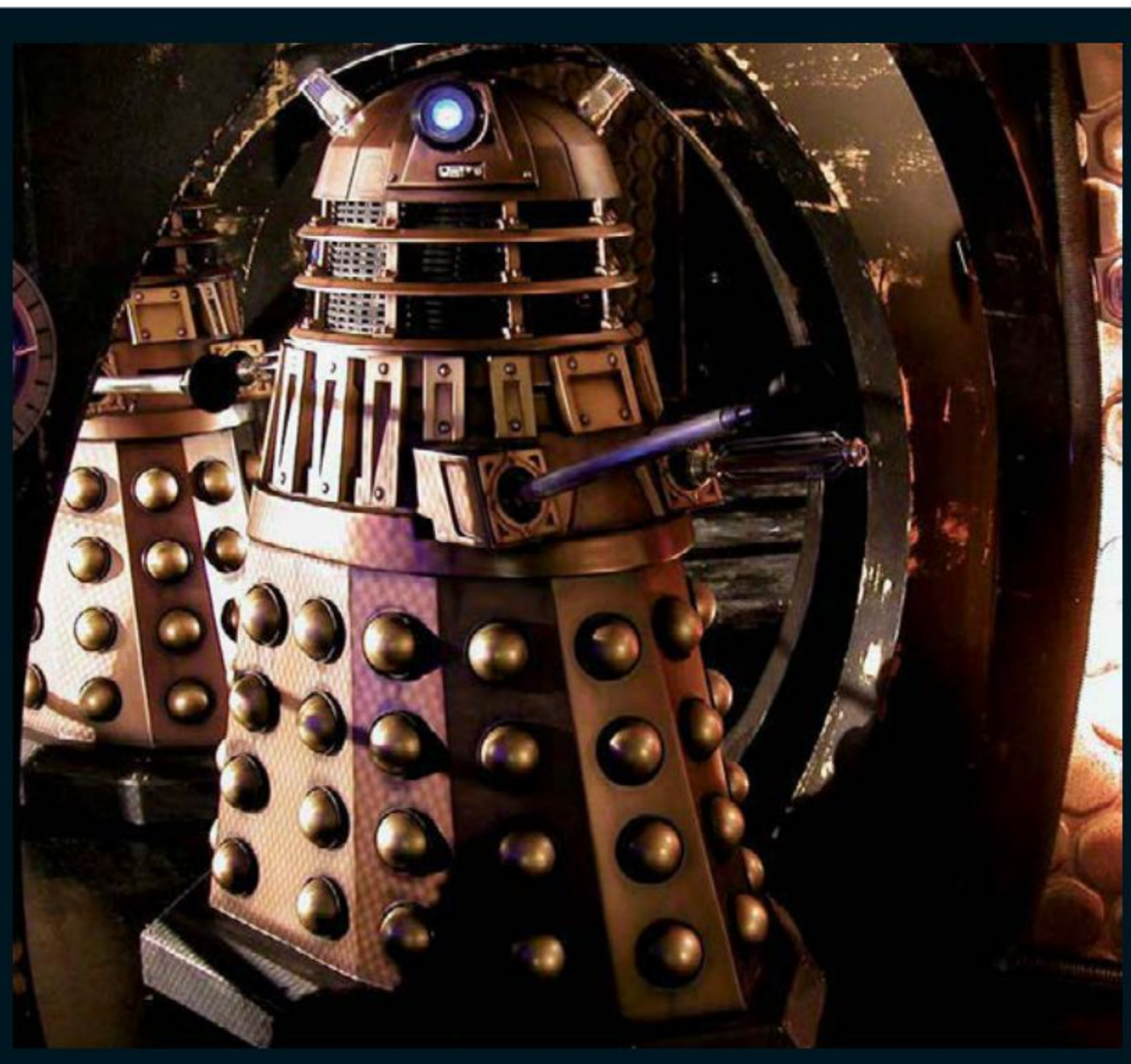
The Time Lords came to believe that the Daleks would eventually dominate the whole of Time and Space, and sent the Doctor back in time to prevent their creation. This blatant attempt to alter history seems to have been what triggered the Time War. During this war, the Doctor believed that he had wiped out the Daleks (and Gallifrey).

But one Dalek survived and bred a new race of Daleks. But then came the Bad Wolf and turned them all into dust.

A series later, millions more Daleks escaped from a Time Lord prison, having been sitting in the Void between universes. Headed by The Cult Of Skaro, they fought the Cybermen whilst the Doctor and Rose closed the breach. But The Cult escaped.

They reappeared half a series later, creating a rather creepy-looking Dalek-Human Hybrid (we don't know either). After that failed plan, Dalek Caan breached the Time Lock that surrounded the Time War. He went on, with Davros, to create a new empire of Daleks and was again defeated ('The Stolen Earth'/'Journey's End').

Since, the Daleks have gone on to return a number of times, serving tea to Churchill ('Victory Of The Daleks'), ending the universe by joining forces with all of the Doctor's enemies ('The Pandorica Opens'/'The Big Bang'), and trapping Clara inside one of them ('Asylum Of The Daleks'). They just won't die, and will always return for more 'fun' with the Doctor.



"We have three fingers, we're clones, and if you punch us in the back we fall over."

The Cybermen in London, from the 1969 story 'Invasion'.

pretty much because they're the baddies and he's the goody. In the more serious 'The Daleks' Master Plan' they've become one of the "seven great powers of the outer galaxy" and are planning the complete destruction of the galaxy. From then on, conquering the universe was the main item on the Dalek's job description.

In what is arguably the best of all Dalek adventures, 'Genesis Of The Daleks' (1976), their origins are ret-conned from scratch.

"The producers thought that the Sherlock Holmes-style Third Doctor needed his own Moriarty"

The Daleks' humanoid ancestors were nasty warmongering fascists even before they mutated into immobile brains with tentacles; and Davros, their creator, specifically 'programmed' them so that they would some day "take their place as the supreme creatures in the UN-I-VERSE!" Considered as sci-fi, these new world-conquering Daleks were much less interesting than the pitiful mutants we met in 1963. But as *Doctor Who* baddies, they were a lot more fun.

The overwhelming majority of *Doctor Who* villains are, like the Daleks, motivated by power. There are exceptions – after 45 years and over a thousand episodes, there are bound to be. The Gods of Ragnorak only wanted to be entertained throughout eternity. Helen A honestly thought her world would improved if unhappiness were prohibited by law. Kroagnon was so

EVIL SCHEMES

The most dastardly, most deceptive, most deadly schemes to be have been propagated by The Doctor's foes

Turn The Earth Into A Spaceship

Who? The Daleks

When? 'The Dalek Invasion Of Earth'

The plan: Wipe out most of the human race using biological weapons. Set the survivors to work drilling a mine-shaft to the centre of the Earth. Drop a bomb down the shaft. Replace the planet's core with a power system that allows you to "pilot it to any point in the universe."

What went wrong? The Doctor helped the humans organise a slave revolt.

Replenish Your Race With Geniuses

Who? The Cybermen

When? 'The Tomb Of The Cybermen'

The plan: Take your entire race. Freeze it in cryogenic tombs. Put a lock on the outside, based on a complicated logic problem that only a genius could solve. Wait for a genius to defrost you. Change him, and everyone he brings with him, into Cybermen. Conquer universe.

What went wrong? The Doctor sealed them back in their tomb, this time forever. (Yeah, right.)

Construct The Ultimate Army

Who? The War Chief

When? 'The War Games'

The plan: Select the most vicious and warlike planet in the galaxy ie Earth. Using your time machine, kidnap soldiers from all its worst wars. Brainwash them into fighting among themselves until only the bravest survive. Use the resultant army to conquer the galaxy.

What went wrong: The Doctor reversed the brainwashing and called in the Time Lords.

Trigger World War III

Who? The Master

When? 'The Mind Of Evil'

The plan? Using an alien mind-parasite, pretend to have invented a machine for sucking the evil out of criminals. Use mind-controlled criminals to hijack a passing missile. Blow up a World Peace Conference. Watch the nations of the world blame each other. Proceed to conquer Earth.

What went wrong? The alien parasite eventually turned on the Master.

Blow Up Cardiff To Power Your Surfboard

Who? A Slitheen

When? 'Boom Town'

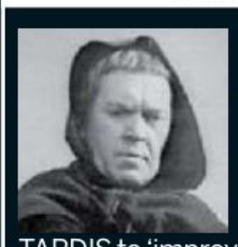
The plan? Build a nuclear power station in the middle of Cardiff. Allow the reactor to explode, blowing open the Time Rift. Use the energy to power your tribophysical waveform macro-kinetic extrapolator, taking you home.

What went wrong? She was captured by the Doctor and tricked into looking into the Heart of the TARDIS.

"The Doctor helped the humans organise a slave revolt against the Daleks and their plan to hollow out the Earth"

THE DOCTOR'S ENEMIES COME IN MANY SHAPES AND SIZES...

TIME LORDS



The Monk
Appearances: 'The Meddling Monk', 'The Daleks' Master Plan'
Naughty rather than evil, the Monk used his TARDIS to 'improve' history. Changing the result of the Battle of Hastings was one of his bright ideas.
Last seen: Marooned on an ice planet.

The War Chief
Appearances: 'The War Games'
Gave Time Travel technology to the War Lords as part of a scheme to gather an invincible army and conquer the universe.
Last seen: Condemned to death by the Time Lords.

Omega
Appearances: 'The Three Doctors', 'Arc Of Infinity'
Detonated a star; unlocked the power of Time Travel; fell into a black hole; got stuck in the anti-matter world; went mad; tried to destroy the universe.
Last seen: Trapped, good and proper, in the anti-matter universe.

Morbius
Appearances: 'Brain Of Morbius'
Executed by his fellow Time Lords for crimes against the universe, Morbius's brain was then preserved and transplanted into a monster by a mad scientist.
Last seen: Falling off a cliff on the planet Karn.

The Rani
Appearances: 'The Mark Of The Rani', 'Time And The Rani'
Like the Master only prettier, the Rani specialises in unlikely science experiments, like stealing the brain fluid from human workers, for example.
Last seen: Fleeing from the planet Lakertya in her TARDIS.

DEMONS

The Daemons
Appearances: 'The Daemons'
Natives of the planet 'daemos', they spent millennia manipulating human history as part of an experiment, giving rise to many legends about devils and horned gods.
Last seen: Self-destructing due to not being able to understand the concept of self-sacrifice.

Sutekh
Appearances: 'Pyramids Of Mars'
Sutekh wanted to wipe out all life, so his own people very sensibly imprisoned him in an Egyptian pyramid. He was freed by a careless archaeologist.
Last seen: Falling into the far future down a time tunnel.

The Fendahl
Appearances: 'Image Of The Fendahl'
A life-devouring entity from Time Lord legend, Fendahl manifested on Earth by means of an ancient skull with a pentangle engraved on it.
Last seen: Being dumped in a supernova.

The Beast
Appearances: 'The Impossible Planet', 'The Satan Pit'
The Beast was imprisoned at the bottom of a deep pit, near a black hole. The Doctor seems to think that the Beast is the real Satan of mythology.
Last seen: Sucked into the Black Hole.

MAD GENIUSES

Davros
First appearance: 'Genesis Of The Daleks'
Kaled scientist. Genetically engineered his people to live in pepperpots. They exterminated him. Later came back from the dead to lead them. Rants a lot.
Last seen: Destroyed, along with Skaro, in a supernova engineered by the Doctor.

Eric Klieg
Appearances: 'The Tomb Of The Cybermen'
Head of the Brotherhood of Logicians. Tracked down deep frozen Cybermen in their tomb. Tried to form a pact with them.
Last seen: Killed by the Cybermen.

John Lumic
Appearances: 'Rise Of The Cybermen', 'The Age Of Steel'
Turned thousands of humans on a parallel Earth into Cybermen, and himself into Cyber-Controller because he was terminally ill and wanted to find a way of living forever.
Last seen: Dropped from a Zeppelin into a burning factory.

Luke Rattigan
Appearances: 'Sontaran Stratagem', 'The Poison Sky'
With the help of the Sontarans, Luke Rattigan plans to destroy the human race and start a breeding colony for geeks on another world.
Last seen: Suicide-bombing the Sontaran war fleet in a last minute outbreak of conscience.

ALIENS

Ice Warriors
Appearances: 'The Ice Warriors', 'The Seeds Of Doom', 'Cold War'
Armoured reptilian Martians who tried to migrate to Earth when their home became too hot for them.
Last seen: In the skies above the North Pole in 1984, having retrieved Marshal Skaldak from a nuclear submarine.

Slitheen
Appearances: 'Aliens Of London'
Alien con-men and thieves. When they disguise themselves as humans it sounds as if they are farting, which is terribly funny. If you're eight.
Last seen: Blown up by their own missile. ("Oh, bollocks!")

Zygons
Appearances: 'Terror Of The Zygons'
Alien shape-shifters who crashed their organic spaceship in Loch Ness. Their planet had been destroyed and they wanted Earth as a replacement.
Last seen: Blown up by the Doctor.

Sontarans
First appearance: 'The Time Warrior'
Three-fingered clones who are interested in nothing but war – which is convenient since they've been fighting a race of shape-shifting balloons called the Rutans for 50,000 years.
Last seen: Blown up by their erstwhile human ally.

pleased with the skyscraper he'd designed that he ended up slaughtering the dirty residents who might have spoiled it. But the typical *Doctor Who* baddy wants to conquer the Earth. Or the Universe. Or all of Time and Space....

Why do they do it? The prototype Earth Invasion story was probably 'The War Machines' (1966), in which a computer, connected to every other computer on Earth via the phone network (now there's an idea which will never catch on) decided that it was so much cleverer than the human race that it should obviously be in charge. (Its brilliance is demonstrated when it instantly works out what TARDIS stands for. Perhaps, since it is called Will Operating Thought ANalogue – WOTAN – it has an affinity for silly acronyms.) This puts it at the head of a long line of baddies who want to conquer the Earth simply because they've got the right.

The most extreme example of this is the Master himself. Introduced in 1970, because the production team thought that the Sherlock Holmes-style Third Doctor needed his very own Moriarty, he was the Doctor's opposite number – a renegade Time Lord with a TARDIS who went around the universe causing trouble rather than sorting it out. The Doctor confronted the Master in every single story in Series Eight, and few fans would deny that the stories in which the Doctor came up against the Master are some of the most fun in *Doctor* ⇨

"The Daleks are what the human race will eventually turn into. We are the Daleks!"

CREEPY-CRAWLIES

Zarbi
Appearances: 'The Web Planet'

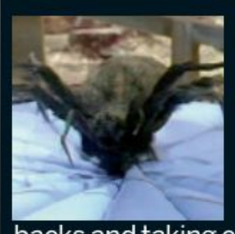
Giant ants who forced their cuddly butterfly-like cousins off the planet Vortis, due to the influence of an evil telepathic creature called the Animus.

Last seen: The Doctor destroyed the Animus so ant and butterfly resumed peaceful coexistence.

Giant Maggots
Appearances: 'The Green Death'

Ordinary Earth insects mutated into giant monsters when nasty Global Chemicals (under the control of one of those pesky megalomaniac computers) pumped chemical waste down a mineshaft.

Last seen: Wiped out by the Doctor using an anti-maggot fungus.



Giant Spiders
Appearances: 'Planet Of The Spiders'

Telepathic alien spiders with a nasty habit of jumping on human's backs and taking control of them. Ruled Metebelis 3, but wanted Earth as well.

Last seen: Wiped out when the Doctor destroyed their leader (imaginatively called 'The Great One').

The Nucleus of the Swarm
Appearances: 'The Invisible Enemy'

A virus that infected the Doctor; it became human-sized due to a small accident with an enlarging ray. **Last seen:** Blown up.

ROBOTS and CYBORGS

War Machines
First appearance: 'The War Machines'

WOTAN – a computer so powerful that it could do square roots in its head – had these robots built to help it conquer the world.

Last seen: Rendered harmless when WOTAN was destroyed.

Mechanoids
First appearance: 'The Chase'

Created by humans to colonise the planet, er, Mechanos. The humans never turned up, so they took to capturing passing space-travellers.

Last seen: Getting the worst of a huge battle with the Daleks.

Clockwork Robots
Appearances: 'The Girl In The Fireplace'

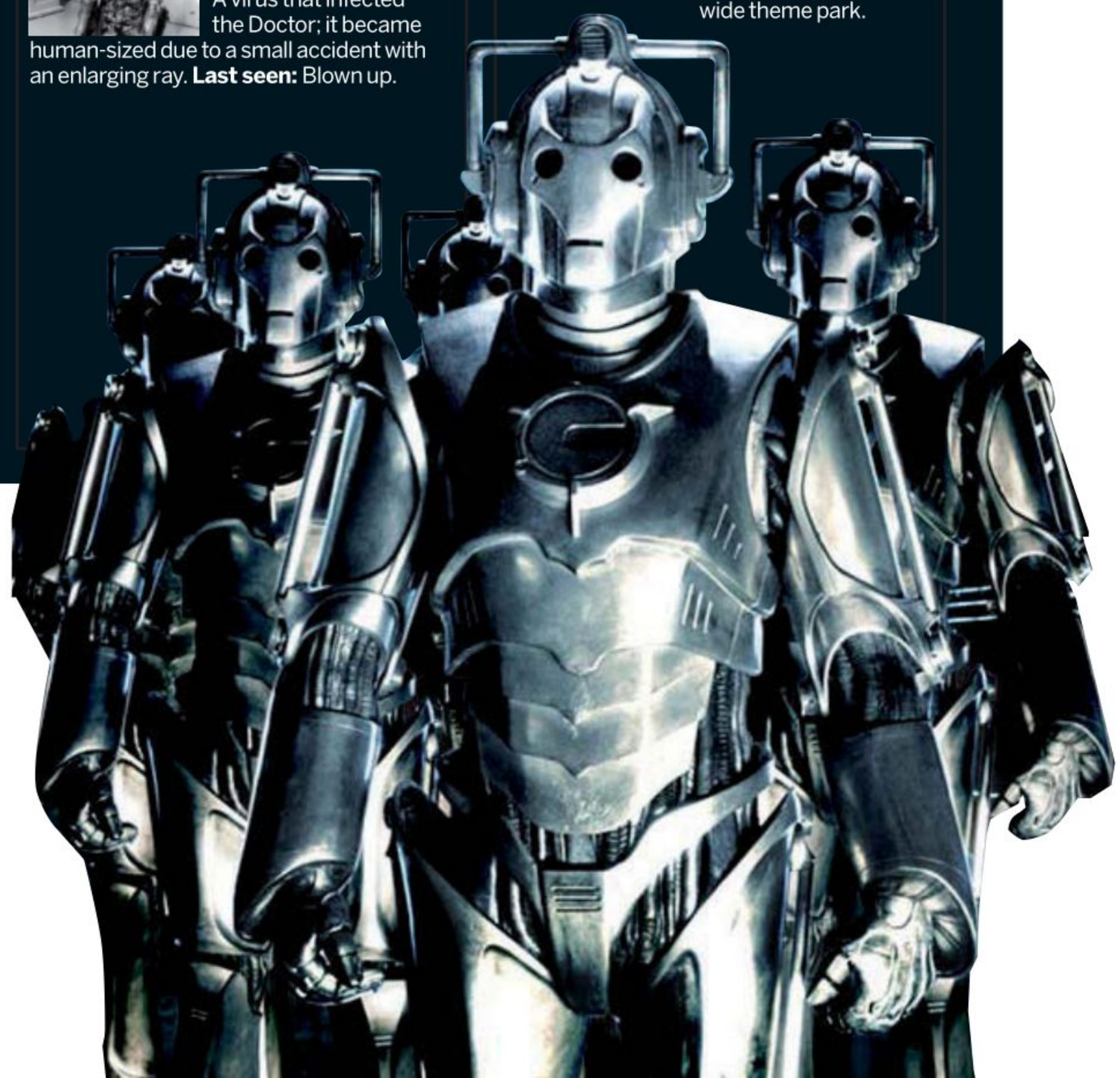
These robots believed that they needed the brain of Madame de Pompadour to repair their spaceship, and travelled through time to get it.

Last seen: Deactivated in the 17th Century.

Cybermen
First appearance: 'The Tenth Planet'

Humanoids who replaced most of their bodies with robotic parts and removed all emotion in the process. Require a supply of humans to augment their numbers.

Last seen: Destroyed along with the planet-wide theme park.



Who's whole run – not least because Jon Pertwee and Roger Delgado were obviously having a terrific, if slightly hammy, time. If the Master was imprisoned in an island castle (as in 'The Sea Devils'), there were bound to be crossed swords over the fireplace, and you could be sure that they would be duelling by episode three. But the Master himself isn't a terribly interesting character. He's just evil. In 'Last Of The Time Lords' Russell T Davies reveals that the Master went mad when he looked into the Time Vortex during his Time Lord invitation and has heard the *Doctor Who* theme music in his head ever since, but madness or even tinnitus are really only different ways of saying "He wants to conquer the universe because he's a baddy."

There's a rather silly scene in 'Logopolis' in which the Master sends out an ultimatum, via a Dictaphone that's presumably connected to some sort of cosmic tannoy. "Peoples of the universe, please attend carefully: the message which follows is vital to the future of you all. The choice for you all is simple: continued existence under my guidance or total annihilation." Although, it isn't quite clear how the peoples of the universe would have gone about saying "Oh, all right then" or what difference it would have made if they had.

Some baddies have, of course, had more specific reasons for their dreams of conquest. Recently, there has been a spate of baddies for whom the Earth is simply a means to an end: the Slitheen planned to blow it up and sell off the radioactive remains for fuel; the Adipose wanted to use it as a breeding colony – as, interestingly enough, did the Sontarans and the Pyroviles. Some have meant well: the humans in Project Golden Age quite sincerely believed that the world be happier if we could go back to a pre-technological age. Even if you agree, using a Time Scoop to drop dinosaurs around London landmarks may not have been the best way of going about it.

Some *Doctor Who* villains are more philosophical. They are waging war simply because they love peace. This is how Davros tries to justify himself to the Doctor. The Daleks are not evil: "When they are the supreme rulers of the universe, then... you will have peace. Wars will end. They are the power not of evil, but of good."

The renegade Time Lord called the War Chief says the same thing: if the Doctor will help him conquer the universe, then there will be eternal peace. The Doctor, interestingly, admits that they have a point; one of reasons for refusing to wipe out the Daleks is that if people weren't making alliances against the Daleks, they would be killing each other. But Davros's real reason is much simpler: "They are conditioned simply to survive. They can survive only by becoming the dominate species."

The roll-call of villains who see conquest simply as means of ensuring their survival is vast. The Zygons had lost their own home planet as a result of a solar flare, so one couldn't necessarily blame them for wanting to terraform the Earth into a replacement – although using a replica of the Loch Ness Monster to attack an Energy Conference may have been a slightly complicated way of going about it. The Ice Warriors tried to migrate to Earth when the planet Mars became too hot for them to survive on.

Perhaps the saddest example is the Silurians. They were humanoid reptiles who'd inhabited the Earth before the human race had even evolved, and they wanted to take their planet back from the mammals who had taken it over while they were in hibernation. Although the Silurian elders were prepared to talk about peaceful co-existence, one individual Silurian unleashes a plague to wipe out the human race. While the Doctor is trying to broker a peace deal, the Brigadier (first head of UNIT) nukes them out of existence. The Brig presumably thinks that killing the Silurians is the only way of ensuring the survival of the

Here we see Julia Roberts' brother playing The Master, who has clearly raided Ming's wardrobe.

The Second Doctor (Pat Troughton) and friends: a Yeti, Ice Warrior, Dalek, Cyberman and Quark.

human race. Which is just what the Silurians themselves would have said about the humans. So who are the real monsters?

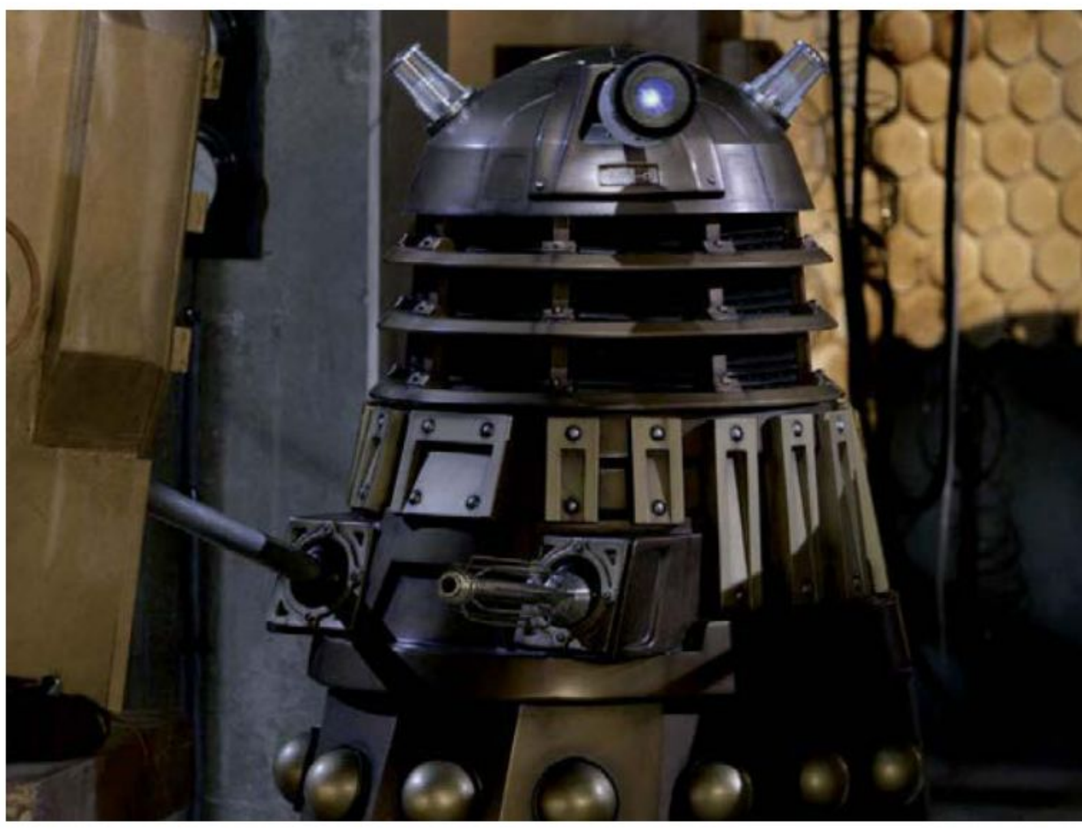
So who is the Doctor's greatest enemy? The Daleks? The Master? In Series 23 the Doctor is put on trial (for the fourth time, at least) by his own people. The prosecutor is the Valeyard – who claims to be the Doctor's evil 13th regeneration. During the trial, the Doctor realises that the Time Lords' facade of benign non-intervention is a sham. He turns on the court, in a scene which almost makes up for the rest of the much maligned Colin Baker era: "In all my travels throughout the universe I have battled against evil… I should have stayed at home! Daleks, Sontarans, Cybermen…? They're still in the nursery compared to us!"

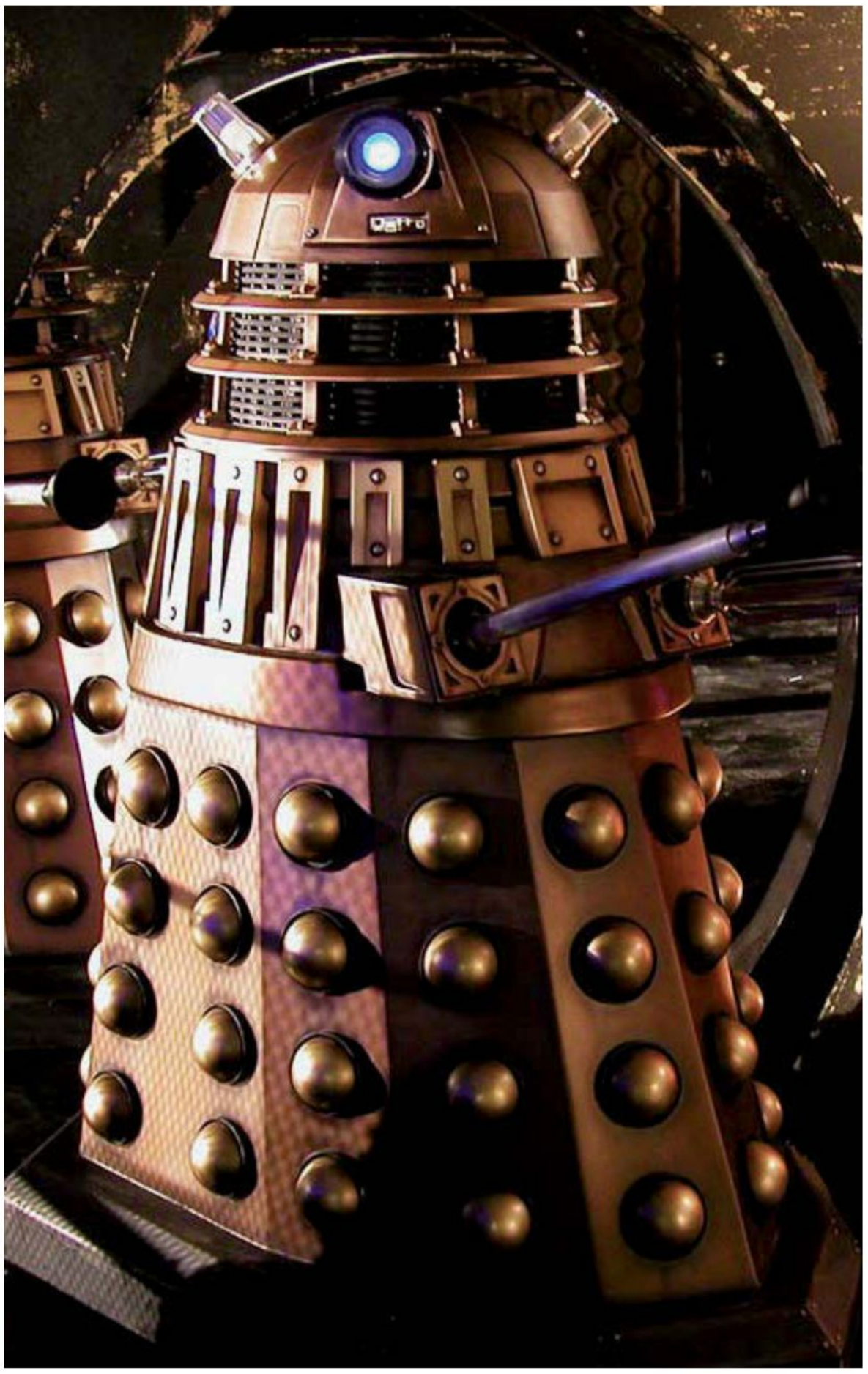
Of course, *Doctor Who* villains represent the kinds of things which we are scared of: spiders, snakes, reptiles, vampires, demons, ghosts, shadows, the darkness – the crazy, neurotic idea that the sat-nav or the TV might be out to get you. But they also represent what we are scared of becoming. Look at Luke Rattigan, who betrays Earth in 'The Sontaran Stratagem'. He hates the world because he feels different from everyone else, because no one understands clever people. If you are a *Doctor Who* nerd (and aren't we all?), haven't you sometimes felt like that? He wants to start a new planet that nerds would run for themselves. And when he doesn't get his own way, he stamps his feet like a toddler – exactly like one of the kids hiding behind the sofa.

In 1973, Terry Nation contributed a story to the Radio Times Special (written to celebrate *Doctor Who* running for an unimaginable ten years) in which he 'revealed' the true origins of the Daleks. Super powerful aliens had once taken primitive humans from Earth and speeded up their evolution to find out what they would eventually become. Of course, it contradicted every other version of the Daleks' origins, but it's an appealing idea. The Daleks are what the human race will eventually turn into. We are the Daleks. It's an idea that found its echo in the playfully cruel Toclafane in 'The Sound Of Drums' - tittering mechanical orbs housing the last detritus of humanity from the darkest corner of the future, having cannibalised each other for meat and parts to the point of madness.

So, anyone could be a monster – the Time Lords, the human race, even… In 'Voyage Of The Damned' Mr Copper tells the Doctor: "If you could decide who lives and who dies… that would make you a monster." Donna, too, when she sees the Doctor mercilessly destroy the offspring of the Racnoss, says that that is why he needs companions: "Because sometimes you need someone to stop you."

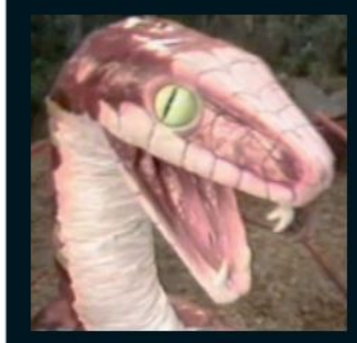
But surely the most frightening moment since *Doctor Who* came back to our screens was when his greatest enemy looked into the view screen and said: "You would make a good Dalek."





BEST FORGOTTEN

Four baddies that had absolutely no one running for the sofa...



That Snake...

Name: The Mara
Story: 'Kinda'

The Mara was a demonic being which possessed Tegan on a visit to a paradise-like planet. A rare attempt to do 'Proper Serious Sci-Fi' on *Doctor Who*, 'Kinda' had a strong environmental message; a convincing portrayal of mental illness; an allegory about the Garden of Eden; and a giant pink snake.

That Rat...

Name: Giant Rat
Story: 'Talons Of Weng-Chiang'

It already had a genuinely scary villain – the hideously deformed Greel and his sinister ventriloquist dummy. But the production team decided that this otherwise classic story would be improved if Leela were menaced by a giant rat – which was obviously a stunt man in a tatty furry suit!

Oh, no you didn't...

Name: The Myrka
Story: 'Warriors Of The Deep'

Return of the Sea Devils: good idea. The Sea Devils in an alliance with their land based cousins, the Silurians: great idea. Have them attack the Doctor with an aquatic dinosaur: excellent idea. Give the role of the dinosaur to they guys who played Dobbin the pantomime horse in *Rentaghost*: what were they thinking?

Who slipped LSD in the water?

Name: The Kandyman
Story: 'The Happiness Patrol'

There's nothing wrong with light-hearted, funny stories. And the idea of a planet where being morose is against the law was clever, in an off-the-wall kind of way. But the monster made of Liquorice Allsorts was neither clever nor funny – in fact, it ensured *Doctor Who* would be a laughing stock for years to come.

"Neither clever nor funny"

THE MASTER

A renegade Time Lord as evil as the Doctor is good, the Master has appeared in six incarnations...

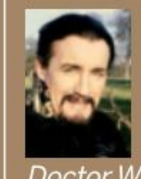
First Master
Roger Delgado
1970-73

For many fans, Roger Delgado is still the definitive Master. A very sophisticated, moustache-twirling gentleman, always very polite to the people he intended to kill, the first Master was a James Bond villain to match the groovy *Doctor Who* of the 1970s.

Second Master
Geoffrey Beevers / Peter Pratt
1976-81

Having used up all 12 regenerations, the Master degenerated into a deformed monster, highly appropriate for the scary, gothic style of Tom Baker's classic period. He tried to extend his life by taking control of Gallifrey, but ended up stealing the body of Tremas of Traken (yes, that is an anagram).

Third Master
Anthony Ainley
1981-86

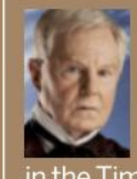


The more light-hearted and campy 1980s version of *Doctor Who* saw the Master portrayed as a ranting, snarling, melodramatic pantomime villain. Anthony Ainley's Master is regarded by some fans as a pale caricature of Roger Delgado's original version.

Fourth Master
Eric Roberts
1996

Executed by the Daleks (the reasons for which have never been explained), the Master turned into a snake made of energy and took over the body of a paramedic. This Master was a Satanic super-villain, still determined to extend his life by stealing the Doctor's unused regenerations.

Fifth Master
Derek Jacobi
2007



After being resurrected by the Time Lords in order to fight in the Time War, the Master managed to escape the destruction of Gallifrey and then transformed himself into a human scientist, Professor Yana. We only get to glimpse him extremely briefly before he regenerates into...

Sixth Master
John Simm
2007

The latest Master is evil for the joy of it; he laughs insanely at his own cleverness and plays Scissor Sisters records while wiping out humanity. The Master and the Doctor have always respected each other, but this Master and the current Doctor seem to be engaged in some bizarre love affair.

Seventh Master
???
???

The Sixth Master allowed himself to die in order to spite the Doctor, so it seems we have seen the last of his villainy. But hang on... whose is that hand taking a ring from the funeral pyre? (Cue: malevolent laughter) Rest assured, so long as there's a Doctor, there will be a Master... probably.

GERRY ANDERSON

22

GERRY ANDERSON

The late and great Anderson, with his fondness and devotion for sci-fi, space and marionette puppetry, will long be recognised as an icon and legend

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
CRITICAL ACCLAIM: ★★★★★
WRITING SKILLS: ★★★★★
PRODUCTION SKILLS: ★★★★★

■ THE LETTERS MBE should speak for themselves; a title he was awarded in 2001 for his services to animation. Anderson was known for creating futuristic TV programmes, with works including *Supercar*, *Stingray*, but, most famously, the still globally appreciated, *Thunderbirds*. The blow of his death devastated the public, and celebrities alike, with tributes flooding in from fans across the world, and not only the world of sci-fi. An announcement from his son on Anderson's official website recently proclaimed some of the icon's unfinished projects are to be developed by Anderson Entertainment, showing that the legend will live on for years to come.

THUNDERBIRDS
Thunderbirds: The Complete Collection is available on Blu-ray from ITV Studios Home Entertainment priced £35.23.

GERRY ANDERSON

GERRY ANDERSON HAS MADE AN INDELIBLE MARK ON SCI-FI. FROM THE PUPPETRY OF THUNDERBIRDS TO THE LIVE ACTION OF UFO AND SPACE: 1999, HIS LEGACY IS A BOLD ONE. WE WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO SPEAK TO THE ICONIC CREATOR BEFORE HIS DEATH IN DECEMBER 2012...

You've created so many successful shows – *Captain Scarlet*, *Thunderbirds*, *Space: 1999* to name but a few – however, which of these productions are you most fond of?
Thunderbirds. This was because the basic make-up of the show was very, very good. This is difficult for me to say about myself, but I really do think I hit the nail on the head.

For us, there's an inherent optimism to the supermarionation shows but what would you say are the thematic hallmarks of a Gerry Anderson production overall?
Action, danger and also responsibility because there is no bad language [in Anderson productions] as in *Team America* for example. We were very careful not to put in things that youngsters could copy and come to harm, and I think we were successfully preaching good as opposed to bad.

Supermarionation has endured even with the advent of CGI effects and now 3D. In this respect do you think it was a revolutionary tool?
Well it was at the time, certainly not now. Now I think it's just another means of entertainment. It seems to have a certain something that people like.

© PA Photos

What exactly prompted you to start making shows using puppetry?
I was working in the movie business as a sound editor when I started to form my own production company. At the time I think we were the only production company in the country; it was an entirely new thing people running their own production company. Well at the time there were puppets on children's television like *Muffin The Mule*, which was a wooden horse that a lady used to do up and down and talk to it. From the point of view of entertaining very young children it was a success, so I'm not knocking it, but it was very primitive, so I couldn't watch that sort of puppet show. So our little production company started and we waited, and waited, and waited and nobody came to see us. Eventually we ran out of money and all us technicians went back to work and put our wages into the company to keep it going. Then one day a woman by the name of Roberta Leigh came in and said: "I've got 52, 15-minute scripts for a television series to be called *The Adventures Of Twizzle*, would you be interested in making it?" Before she finished pronouncing her last word we all said yes because we desperately needed the production. After some discussion she said that it's got to be made using puppets, at which point I nearly vomited because I just thought it was such a degrading thing to do. But in order to try and get back into live action I shot the puppets in the same way in which you would shoot a television series involving people. It looked very good and I thought the people with the money would say "This guy's wasting time making puppet films; let's give him some live action," when in fact the reverse applied and they said, "Great puppet series he makes; let's give him another one." So I got trapped.

Where did the term 'Supermarionation' come from?
I would meet people who I had worked with in the industry and they would say, "Oh hi Gerry, I hear you are making puppet films now," and I'd think, "Oh God this is terrible." I thought we must overcome this so I took the word 'super', 'marionette' and 'animation' and put them all together to make 'Supermarionation'. Then, of course, people would say, "Oh you're making puppet films," and I would say, "No, we are making Supermarionation."

The film *Doppelganger* was a change of direction for you in that it was a live-action production. What do you remember about the challenges this presented you with?
Well, because it was a Universal picture we had to have a classed director, and despite all the films we had made, they wanted a class director and they wouldn't start the film until we got one. One day I met with an American director called Robert Parrish. He came to see me and he said that it would be wonderful to work with me. Now, I thought the picture was good and that the idea was good, and he did a lot of good work on it, of course. But technically he knew nothing about space, gravity, planets or the way we are spinning around the sun. None of this he knew ➪

Thunderbird 2 prepares for takeoff.

THUNDERBIRDS

Taking Supermarionation to a new level

***Thunderbirds* was a huge success. Describe the moment when the premise popped into your mind?**
I remember it very well. There was a German mine disaster and what happened was the mine was, in fact, under a lake. The bottom fell out of the lake and the entire mine flooded. Now the mine comprised a central shaft going way down into the earth and then there were galleries going off in all directions. The engineers at the mine worked out where they thought the water might be and where there might be air bubbles. There was one particular gallery where they were convinced the air would be trapped there. So they drilled down a small hole that came through the roof of this gallery and dropped a microphone so the people were able to speak to them… The people up the top decided they had to get them out somehow, and they came to the conclusion that the only way to get them out was with a thundering great drill. Then came the bad news that the nearest drill was about 400 miles away, and it was going to have to come by train, taking a minimum of eight hours. Anyway, it arrived and while they were drilling they made a cage that was tall enough for a man to get into. They broke into the gallery, lowered the cage and brought the men to the surface. And they all survived. Now while all that was going on I was listening to it on the radio every day. I started to think that there should be supply dumps all over the world with rescue equipment. This wasn't very practical, so then I thought there could be a central depot with equipment that could then be taken to a rescue site at speed. Then I thought we could get all the aircraft manufacturers to let us have their prototypes and the latest aircrafts at our service. I then thought spies will try and get a hold of it so then I decided it better be hidden away on an uncharted island in the Pacific. So that's how it came about.

> The show was an ideal vehicle for action… it was one of those things that worked beautifully

Why do you think *Thunderbirds* was such a unique success?
In order to get people into the cinema most films had to deal with violence. We were able to draw people in, in the same way, but in a totally non-violent manner, with a message that we are saving people's lives. Then, of course, you had the father with the sons. They would go off on a mission and he would be proud of them, but also worried about them getting hurt or killed. So we sympathised with the father. All the characters were American – this was because at the time they were leading the world in terms of rocketry and fast aircrafts… so the believability of the story would have fallen apart if we had said a rocket's being launched from Scunthorpe tomorrow morning. So we had these American characters and then I remember thinking we ought to have a British representation, because after all this is a British show. So then we had Penelope and Parker. Now, we British can laugh at ourselves, and America loves laughing at us so it worked very well. But overall the show was an ideal vehicle for action, there was a bit of scandal in it with what was going on between Jeff Tracy and Lady Penelope, and it was just one of those things where everything seemed to work beautifully.

anything about, it wasn't his scene at all. So one day I went into rushes and I saw a shot of the astronauts sitting in the spaceship, and they were moving around as if they were travelling in a motorcar over a lumpy road. I said to him, "You're going to have to reshoot that Bob," and he said "Why?" So I said, "Well you've got the capsule moving, in space there is no air, no turbulence, there's no nothing – it flies straight." He went on to say, "Well I can't do that, the audience will expect there to be movement" and I explained, "Maybe some would expect that now but as time goes on people will realise this is how space travel will be." That started a great deal of conflict; I'm not criticising him, as he's not here to defend himself as he passed away some time ago. But the fact is I didn't like him and just as importantly he did not like me. We had one hell of a ride through that picture and it wasn't a happy experience.

Sci-fi has obviously played a massive part in your career. What is it about the genre that appeals to you?
I often say to people that I have had little to do with steering my life. I made a series, or if you like a series about tomorrow and things to come, then it became science fiction. When I spoke to people they would say, "What's your idea Gerry?" For example, I might say to a broadcaster "Well it's a love story," and they would immediately detune because they expected me to say a science-fiction story. I always had another idea in my pocket, so to speak, and when I could see they weren't warming I would say, "On the other hand I do have this science-fiction project," and, of course, everybody would lean forward because they were interested. So I won't say I became stuck with science fiction, because I like doing it, but it wasn't through choice.

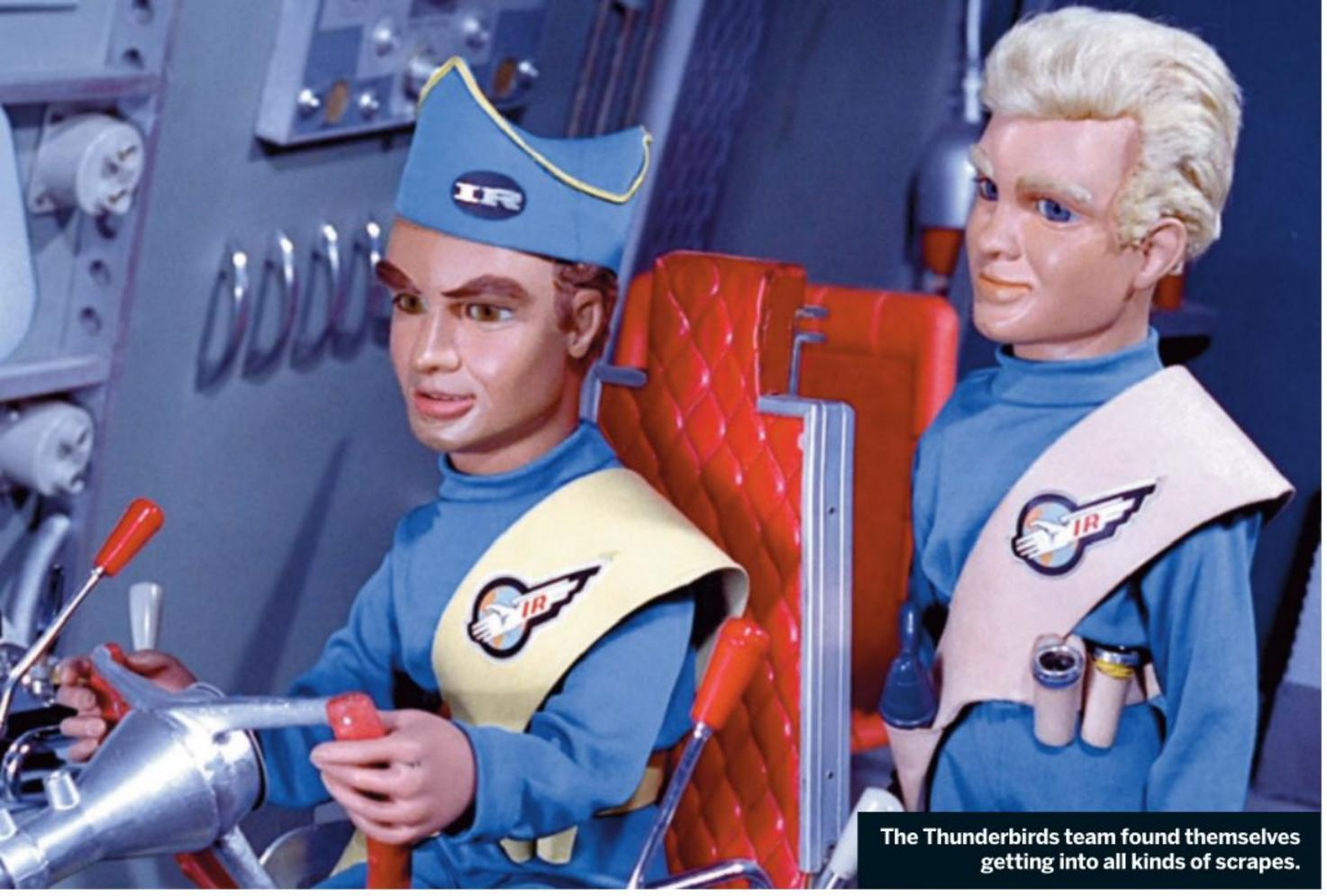
Is there any particular creator or franchise you're a fan of?
Clint Eastwood, he is my favourite director. I wish I could make pictures as good as his. His style of picture is something that I would love to have made; he is an exceptionally talented man.

You're a truly well respected figure in the industry but if you had the power to change one thing about science fiction as it is today what would it be?
I'm not sure that I would want to change anything radically because there a lot of people worldwide who make movies, and they all make a different style of movie, and that is what makes the world go round. If I could single out one series it would be *Star Trek*. The first thing I say about *Star Trek* is that I would love to have thought of the idea, I would loved to have produced it and I still would love to own part of it. It's one of the greatest television series ever made. Having said that, I used to enjoy the early *Star Trek*s until the aliens came aboard. I'm being sarcastic intentionally now, but I couldn't help imagine that the make-up lady had a box full of pimples, and when she was told there was going to be an alien she would put pimples over the eyebrows or on the cheeks, and I could never really believe in them as aliens. But the fact is a big audience around the world did; it became one of the biggest successes of all time and is about to repeat itself. So that's my comment.

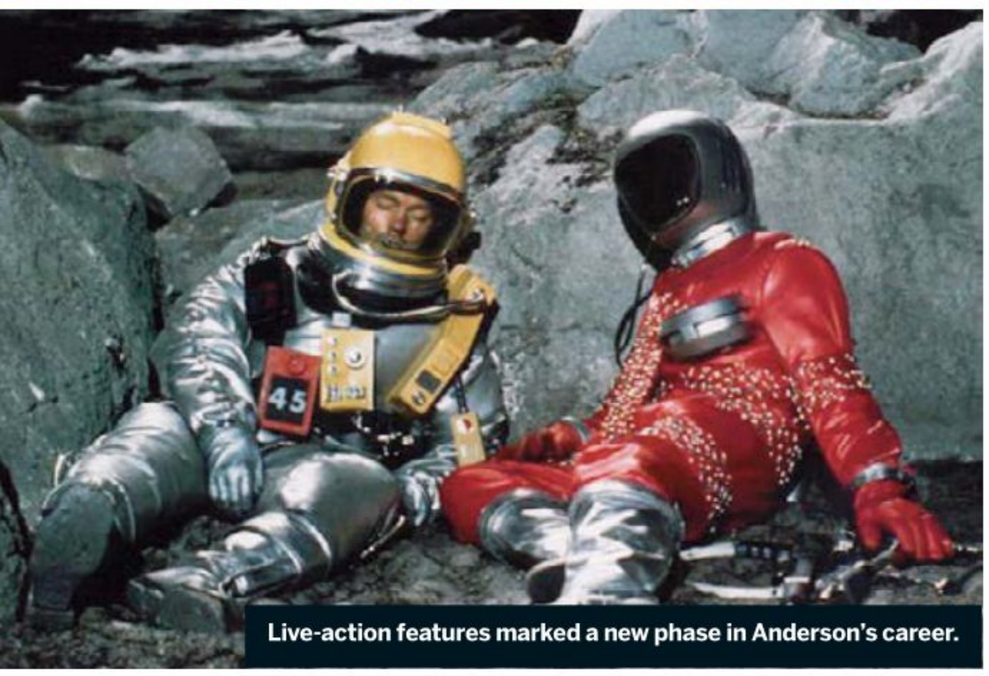
UFO

A live-action departure from Gerry's usual work

***UFO* is now getting made into a full-length movie. What can you tell us about this?**
Well I know about the press release because a very kind person from ITV America phoned me to say, "Gerry I know that the original *UFO* is your picture and I thought it would be terrible if you read this press announcement and nobody had contacted you." I



The Thunderbirds team found themselves getting into all kinds of scrapes.

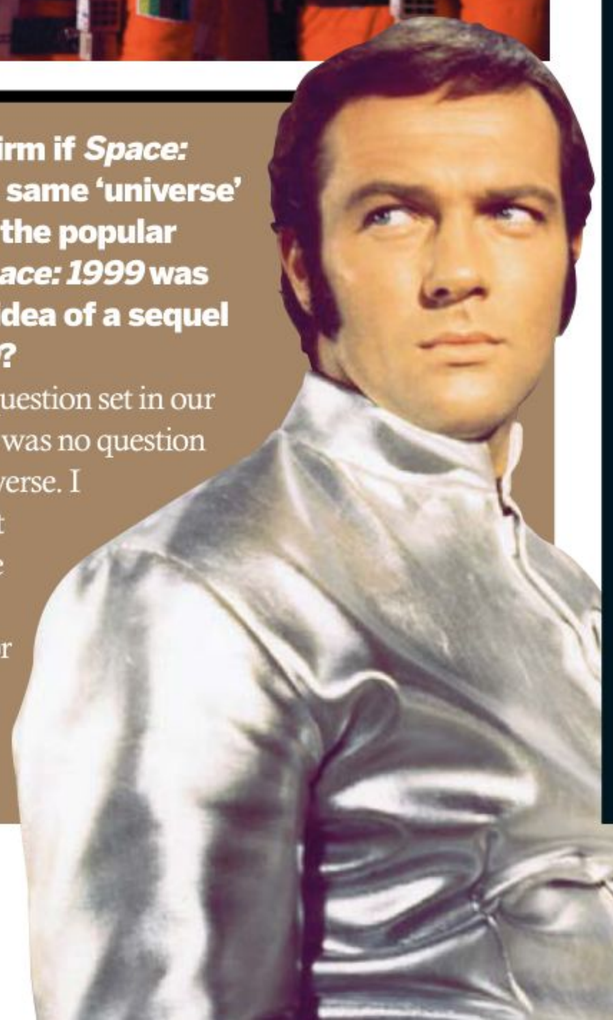


Live-action features marked a new phase in Anderson's career.

thought that was such a kind thing to do. We started talking and I was told that this world famous producer/director was producing it, they've got two American writers and I think it was going to go to Paramount. I thought to myself that remakes don't always succeed – *Thunderbirds* was a typical example, as was *The Avengers* – so I started saying that it needs to be made with great sensitivity or it might suffer the same fate as *Thunderbirds*. The discussion came around to me perhaps being a consultant. I know they are going to call me for more discussions but I can't say any more than that.

Can you confirm if *Space: 1999* is in the same 'universe' as *UFO* given the popular myth that *Space: 1999* was born out the idea of a sequel series of *UFO*?

It was without question set in our universe – there was no question of a parallel universe. I wouldn't do that anyway because that is a very difficult thing for people who go to the cinema to get a hold of.



FIREBALL XL5

Anderson's strings-attached sci-fi

Do you feel that *Fireball XL5*'s black-and-white presentation adds something that colour is unable to?

Over the years there has been a lot of controversy about people saying that if a show is filmed in black and white then that is how we should see it. I think it applies to a director that has a very intense subject or an historic story who then says, "I want to make this in black and white because it will make it look more realistic and believable." Then if that's later colourised it destroys the director's original intention, but I think generally speaking most black-and-white productions were made in black and white simply because they didn't have colour. If you think about it, today we have the ability to shoot in black and white and in colour – what proportion of films are shot in black and white now? Very, very few. I'm one of those people that like to see things in colour, so if it is possible to colour it, good luck.

You voiced Robert The Robot. Was performing as one of your characters a fun experience?

That was a dark, dark secret of mine [laughs]. Well the first thing to say is that when we made this series there was no way of electronically assimilating a robot's voice. So the idea was that we made a wooden box out of plywood, at one end of the box we cut a hole, which was the right shape for me to push my mouth into. At the other end of the box, which was sealed, there was a small microphone. Then we got hold of a vibrator…

ones that were used by people whom had cancer of the larynx. I put my mouth in the hole, the vibrator under my chin and then I mouthed the words and… they came out monotone because the vibrator was vibrating at one frequency. It was really an innovation.

As one of your earliest Supermarionation shows, are you fond of *Fireball XL5*?

> To get a British-made programme like Fireball XL5 shown in the US was a huge coup

I am and with very good reason. It was probably the only show that put us on the map. It got sold to NBC in America and at the time if any show went to America and it was said to be English it was immediately assumed to be crap, and in most cases that was true. So to get a British-made programme shown over there was a huge coup and to get it shown on NBC was just unheard of. So it went out… and it then became a big hit. As a result of that Lew Grade, who was financing all my films, told me, "Gerry, I'm going to buy your company." I thought, "What a cheek he's got." I didn't say anything but inside I was furious, and then he mentioned the amount of money he was prepared to pay for it and I clearly remembering thinking, "What a good idea." So *Fireball* kicked that off and as soon as Lew bought the company, money became no object and we just went from strength to strength.

ROBBY THE ROBOT

FORBIDDEN PLANET
Forbidden Planet is available on Blu-ray from Warner Home Video priced £7.25

23
ROBBY THE ROBOT

The seven and a half foot, 300lbs, star of Forbidden Planet is one of the defining droids in the history of science fiction, inspiring many imitators

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

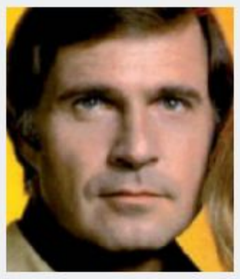
■ FOOLING MANY after *Forbidden Planet* promotional posters represented him as a metal monster, the harmless brainchild of Robert Kinoshita - built by MGM for a reported $125,000 – has since notched up numerous cameos within the television and film industry. Although not often referenced by name, he's appeared in *Gremlins*, *The Addams Family* and *The Twilight Zone*, amongst others. Gerry Anderson's even paid homage to the towering android, voiced by Marvin Miller, by featuring a character of the same name in his all-marionette series, *Fireball XLS*. Inducted into the Robot Hall of Fame –yes, that is a real thing – in 2004, Robby's rated within the robot world almost as highly as bickering *Star Wars* duo, R2D2 and C-3PO.

"We needed something to help bridge the gap between childish fantasy adventure, and fantasy adventure of a different kind"

BUCK ROGERS SEASON 1 & 2
Buck Rogers In The 25th Century Seasons One and Two are available on DVD from Universal Pictures UK priced £11.42 each.

24
BUCK ROGERS

After being heavily exposed to radioactive gas, the WW1 veteran – and star of Feeder's hit single – awakens 500 years later to a very different life



SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ ORIGINALLY APPEARING as Anthony Rogers in Armageddon 2419AD, Rogers later underwent a name change after the National Newspaper Syndicate adapted the story into a comic strip. After his 1929 paper debut, his adventures gradually hit more mediums, including comics, books, radio, film and TV, and Buck quickly became an important figure within US popular culture. Often credited for bringing space exploration into early media – as well as toy ray guns into the homes of, what we're sure, were delighted parents – Rogers' influence can be found worldwide. As the premise behind the Daffy Duck spoof, Duck Dodgers, his comic strip also provided *ET* with the inspiration behind his 'phone home' device, and had a heavy influence on TV series, *Futurama*.

BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY

IF YOU THOUGHT YOU'D SEEN THE LAST OF THE SEVENTIES, THEN THINK AGAIN. BY THE END OF THE 25TH CENTURY THE SEVENTIES WILL HAVE TAKEN OVER THE ENTIRE GALAXY, AND MOST PLANETS WILL HAVE BECOME NOTHING MORE THAN ENORMOUS DISCOS. WELCOME TO THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO BUCK ROGERS TV SHOW.

In 1987, NASA launched bugger all. In a freak mishap the previous year, space shuttle Challenger and its crew were blown up 73 seconds after launching, bringing a temporary halt to all manned NASA launches and scuppering any chance the opening narrative to *Buck Rogers In The 25th Century* ever had of actually coming true. If only they'd picked 1986 – that would have been almost eerily prophetic. Then perhaps we could have comforted ourselves in the thought that maybe, just maybe, the seven brave souls aboard Challenger hadn't tragically lost their lives that fateful January morning, but had been transported 500 years into the future.

On reflection, most people had probably forgotten all about Universal's short-lived sci-fi series by 1987. The Seventies was yet to become kitsch and few would have predicted that *Buck Rogers* – a very Seventies show, despite mostly being made in the Eighties – could be revived as a cult classic. But just two years later, it was.

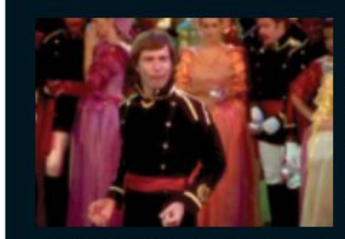
The Eighties was the era of 'Yoof TV' in the UK, whereby programmers and producers made numerous attempts to target the difficult-to-pin-down group that sit uncomfortably between children and adults – teenagers. This was long before T4 came along and nailed the teen formula; most youth-targeted programming was way off the mark, with patronising and embarrassing results. One of the select few 'Yoof TV' projects that just about got it right at least some of the time was Def II, an early evening strand of shows commissioned with a teenaged audience in mind. Some remember Def II for its credible home-grown shows like *Rough Guide* and *Rapido*, but for many it was Def II's retro cult-classic slot that made switching over to BBC2 after yet another dramatic *Neighbours* cliffhanger worthwhile.

Buck Rogers In The 25th Century joined Def II in 1989, but the full 37-episodes would be repeated several times in the years to come. It was during this era that we, and presumably most of you, first became aware of its sparkling, spandex-clad charms. We were at a difficult age. Still children, but the early stirrings of an imminent hormonal overhaul had begun to taint our boyhood innocence. We needed something to help us bridge the gap between childish fantasy adventure, and fantasy adventure of a very different kind, the possible existence of which was just beginning to dawn on us. Buck Rogers, with its pulp sci-fi storylines and cast of glittering galactic glamour girls was exactly what was required.

But when it was first conceived, *Buck Rogers* wasn't intended for Def II's cult audience of hormonal 13 year olds. It was prime-time family fodder produced hot on the heels of the astronomical success of *Star Wars*. Prolific TV producer, Glen A Larson, came up with the idea for the show immediately after the abrupt cancellation of his other cult sci-fi hit, *Battlestar Galactica*. He still had a storeroom full of laser guns and spaceships, and was damned if he was going to bin the whole lot while the market for space-age adventure was still so ripe. The show's name and basic premise, ⇨

THE BEST OF BUCK

The five best episodes of Buck Rogers In The 25th Century ever



1. AWAKENING

The original feature-length movie has its own unique *Bond*-esque opening sequence, featuring an assortment of delectable space-babes in sexy, silver swimwear. Awakening also features the legendary 'Something Kinda Funky' dancing scene.

T In the opening sequence we see Buck frozen inside his ship. The ice effect was achieved by spraying Gil Gerard with dry shampoo.

2. CRUISE SHIP TO THE STARS

The show's Seventies glamour vibe goes into overdrive as Buck climbs aboard the Lyran Queen, a starship laden with beautiful women, including the 'genetically perfect' Miss Cosmos. Even Twiki gets some action.

T Miss Cosmos was played by *Playboy*'s Playmate, Dorothy Stratten, who was murdered by her estranged husband just eight months after the episode aired.

2. SPACE VAMPIRE

Buck Rogers pays tribute to Nostradamus in this, the scariest of all the Buck Rogers episodes. It's also one of the funniest, mainly because the bizarre vampire costume looks like it was made on *Blue Peter*.

T Buck repels the vampire with an old *Battlestar Galactica* prop. It's Commander Adama's key.

4. PLANET OF THE SLAVE GIRLS

Otherwise known as "the steamy toga one", this episode of Buck lives up to the promise of its titles with aplomb. As if Wilma Deering in a slave girl toga wasn't enough, she gets locked in a steam room as well. Phew!

T Brigadier Gordon (AKA Flash Gordon) is played by Buster Crabbe, who played both Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon back in the Thirties.

5. SPACE ROCKERS

Buck Rogers is riddled with hysterical disco scenes, but none are as OTT as those of Space Rockers, the episode featuring Andromeda, a rock group who could well be the missing link between Boney M and the Teletubbies.

T There's a real band called Andromeda. These prog-metallers are apparently very popular in both in Turkey and in their home country of Sweden.

Just one of the many glamourous ladies on the show.

A poorly conceived character, Hawk was an unwelcome addition to the show.

"Lowbrow and proud of it, Buck Rogers placed entertainment value above all other considerations, and was all the better for it"

along with many of its characters, came from Phillip Francis Nowlan's classic Buck Rogers comic strip. Larson, however, took more obvious inspiration from *Star Trek*, *Star Wars* and er… *Saturday Night Fever*. In 1979, US pop culture was dominated by two obsessions – *Star Wars* and disco – so a show that combined the two couldn't fail. Sure enough, the first season was a huge hit, pulling in big audiences week after week despite being universally panned by critics who insisted on taking it all far too seriously.

The formula may have been working, but not everyone was happy. The show's star, Gil Gerard, was tiring of playing a two-dimensional, wise-cracking action man, and made repeated demands for the show to take a more serious turn.

By the time season two came around, he got his way and dramatic changes were made to the show's formula. Sadly, the new straight-laced presentation only served to make the show even sillier, only now it wasn't silly in a fun way. Compared to Season One, Season Two was a flop, and NBC execs halted production at the season's halfway point. It's fair to say the cancellation was something of a mercy killing.

One of the most important lessons *Buck Rogers* took from *Star Wars* was that of the profitability of merchandising. It may only have been around for a few years, but during the show's brief lifespan dozens of Buck-branded products were launched. Most popular by far were the toy Starfighters that came complete with plastic missiles that could be shot into the eyes and throat of innocent bystanders at the push of a button. Fortunately, the missiles were considerably smaller than those of the similar *Battlestar Galactica* toys, which had to be recalled after a four-year-old boy shot himself in the mouth with one and choked. The Corgi Starfighters are still pretty common and you'll have no trouble finding one on eBay, but putting together a complete collection of *Buck Rogers* merchandise will require some pretty serious investment. The Corgi toys look positively dull when compared to the three flying rocket kits you could get. These kits allowed you to build foot-long models of an Earth Starfighter, Buck's Ranger 3 rocket or a Draconian Fighter that could be launched up to 750 feet in the air. Expect to pay at least £50 for the full set, and that's without the motors and launch kits required to actually get them off the ground.

Like a lot of pulp TV, *Buck Rogers* is hit-and-miss even at the best of times. For the most part it's a show that's proud to be lowbrow, placing sheer entertainment value above all other considerations, and

SHOW STOPPERS

The five worst episodes of Buck Rogers In The 25th Century ever broadcast

1. TIME OF THE HAWK

Episode one of season two is where it all went wrong. Numerous misguided changes were made, including the introduction of that feather-headed fool, Hawk. This just feels like it's been made a two-parter for the sake of it.

Ⓣ Hawk is played by Thom Christopher, who received the 1992 Daytime Emmy award for an Outstanding Supporting Actor In A Drama Series.

2. COSMIC WIZKID

Gary "What chu talkin' 'bout Willis?" Coleman stars as Hieronymous Fox, a child genius who, like Buck, was frozen for the period between the 20th and 25th Centuries. He is annoying beyond all fathomable comprehension.

Ⓣ Gary Coleman stood against Arnold Schwarzenegger in the 2003 California recall election. He came eighth out of 135 candidates.

delivering its hokey brand of sci-fi with a knowing wink. It's often difficult to be sure whether it's being funny on purpose or not, but there's an overall sense that this is a show that knows it's daft. It's when it attempts to be in some way meaningful that it can get a bit painful to watch, although even some of the more light-hearted stuff can be downright annoying. We're looking at you Gary Coleman.

The show is at its best when it's revisiting the themes laid out in the pilot movie. During the opening titles of that first episode, Buck's 500-year slumber is condensed into a three-minute dream sequence where beautiful women in tight space-spandex outfits surround him. It turns out to be a somewhat prophetic fantasy as it becomes apparent that through many of the 25th Century adventures to come, Buck is indeed surrounded by women in spandex. But of all the gorgeous girls that fall over themselves in a bid (sometimes literally at auction) to get their hands on Buck's shrink-wrapped package, only two are actually ever in with a chance. We speak, of course, of Colonel Wilma Deering and Princess Ardala of Draconia. Episode one sees these two competing for Buck's affections and establishing a love triangle – surely the 25th Century's hottest? – that will be revisited again and again in later episodes. In the one corner there's Wilma Deering: sensible, formal, efficient… but very sexy. In the other, Princess Ardala: evil, manipulative, spoiled… but very sexy. Somehow, Buck manages to resist plumping for one or the other (or both), preferring instead to keep both at arm's length and play them off against each other.

While he can't resist the occasional flirtatious innuendo, Buck is generally pretty guarded regarding how he really feels about Wilma and Ardala. But chances are that whatever's he's thinking privately, his robotic companion Twiki will be only too happy to blurt out loud, both in English and in his own language (which consists solely of the versatile phrase, "Biddi-biddi-biddi"). Upon meeting Ardala for the first time, Twiki exclaims, "What a body!" and in Cruise Ship To The Stars, when Wilma appears in her sexy rich girl disguise, it's Twiki who points out that, "Wilma's looking real foxy!" Is it just coincidence that the little fella's head looks like a penis? We doubt it.

The best scene in 'Awakening', the very first episode, and probably the best scene on the entire run of the show, is the one when Buck and Ardala dance to a 25th Century band's interpretation of Buck's request for "something kinda funky." The contrast between Ardala's slinky manoeuvres and Buck's awkward, dad-at-a-wedding shuffles is fantastic. Wilma thinks it's "disgusting", we think it's comedy gold.

Watching *Buck Rogers In The 25th Century* now, of course, it's actually a snapshot of the past – a time when electronic music, spandex, lip gloss and enormous shoulder pads represented the future of human civilisation here on planet Earth. And it's Buck Rogers' antiquity, not its futurism, which lends it so much charm.

Because of the knowing winks, the wholesome image never grated.

Buck Rogers Memorabilia

It might not be as valuable as the original Thirties *Buck Rogers* merchandise, but there are still a lot of cool collectables out there worthy of addition to your Ala ddin's Cave of memorabilia. The most widely available items are action figures, model spacecraft and signed photos, but hardcore collectors can boast of genuine props and costumes from the show.

Why is Buck Rogers In The 25th Century so iconic?

1 It's of the time
It's about as futuristic as The History Channel, but still, the Seventies are light years better than the 2490s anyway.

2 It's aged pretty well
It features many of the most beautiful and glamorous women in the entire galaxy. What's more, most of them like to wear spandex.

3 It's great entertainment
All delivered with a knowing wink, even at the time, everyone involved knew that the whole thing was fairly ridiculous.

4 It was presented as fun
No other show can boast of sneaking such a blatant phallic symbol into a prime-time family entertainment slot.

3. THE SATYR

By this point, the writing was on the wall for season two, and the bottom of the barrel was almost worn through. Buck visits a planet where colonists are being oppressed by a malevolent man-goat. Dear God!

T Strictly speaking, it's the Fauns of Roman mythology that have goats legs, not Satyrs, which are from Greek mythology and quite different.

4. JOURNEY TO OASIS

After abandoning the superb ongoing love triangle of the first season, the writers attempted to introduce a new romantic tension by bringing in an old flame of Wilma's. He tries to impress her by removing his own head.

T This is a carbon copy of the *Star Trek* episode, Journey To Babel. It even has the same guest star, Mark Lenard, playing almost the same role.

5. PLANET OF THE AMAZON WOMEN

With a promising title like this you'd expect a similar treat to Planet Of The Slave Girls, but it's anything but. It's just a boring take on an old formula. The scene in which Buck is auctioned off to the highest bidder is especially stupid.

T Buck fetches a price of 20,000 credits, which is only about twice the amount he wins playing Blackjack in Vegas In Space.

25

CORNELIUS

The historian, archaeologist – and chimpanzee – Cornelius is central to the first The Planet Of The Apes novel, as well as the earlier film adaptations

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ LIKE ANY other chimp, Cornelius wanted a normal, quiet life; which was quickly made difficult by his other half, Zira, after she persuaded him to help astronaut, Taylor. The intelligent, good guy/ape later proved to the monkey world that apes didn't evolve from humans – kind of like Charles Darwin's monkey twin. Played by Robby McDowall, who later went on to voice his son Milo/Caesar, he's the protagonist of the initial novel and first three movie instalments from the 1960s-70s. The central simian of 2011's *Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes* is a shout-out to Cornelius' offspring, and we've no doubt branches of his family tree – literal or spiritual - will be cropping up for generations to come.

THE FATHER OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

HOW THE APE DYNASTY OF CORNELIUS AND CAESAR AND THE BIGGEST SCI-FI MOVIE OF THE SIXTIES CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF THE WORLD

In a fitting manner for a piece of time-travel sci-fi, *Planet Of The Apes* features conventions from multiple periods scattered throughout film history. Despite being made in 1968, its title and premise could just have easily have come from the previous decade when sensationalist titles like *Earth Vs The Flying Saucers* and *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* were common. Likewise, the film's pioneering use of make-up, as well as its move toward franchise merchandising, pre-dates similar traits which would be fundamental to the success of the *Star War* series, which came nine years later.

The themes at the heart of its story, however, were pure Sixties. This decade was one of the most tumultuous in American history. In the midst of the Cold War, protests against the conflict in Vietnam, and the American Civil Rights movement, the period was defined by social unrest and shockingly punctuated by the assassinations of John F Kennedy, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. These events certainly cast a dark shadow over the America of the Sixties but the same decade also held glimmers of optimism for the country. In 1961, Alan Shepard became the first American in space and, a year later, John Glenn became the first to orbit the Earth. And, just before the turn of the decade, on 1 December 1959, the very first colour photograph of the planet was taken from space. Such imagery had a profound impact on America and the rest of the world; highlighting the unity of the planet's populace, they promoted a sense of peace and community, while the space race as a whole created a sense of optimism that mankind could find meaning beyond the new frontiers of the solar system.

> ***"Take your stinking paws off me, you damned dirty ape!"***

Earlier entities, like Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek* series, obviously took inspiration from this wave of optimism in 1966 but, in 1968, *Planet Of The Apes* hit the big screen with a story that combined the period's stargazing sense of hope with the dark feelings of political and social unrest that had defined the decade. Though the film drew audiences into the cinema with its exciting premise of an astronaut who crash-lands on a planet of hostile ape-men, the underlying content was actually much closer to home – in more ways than one.

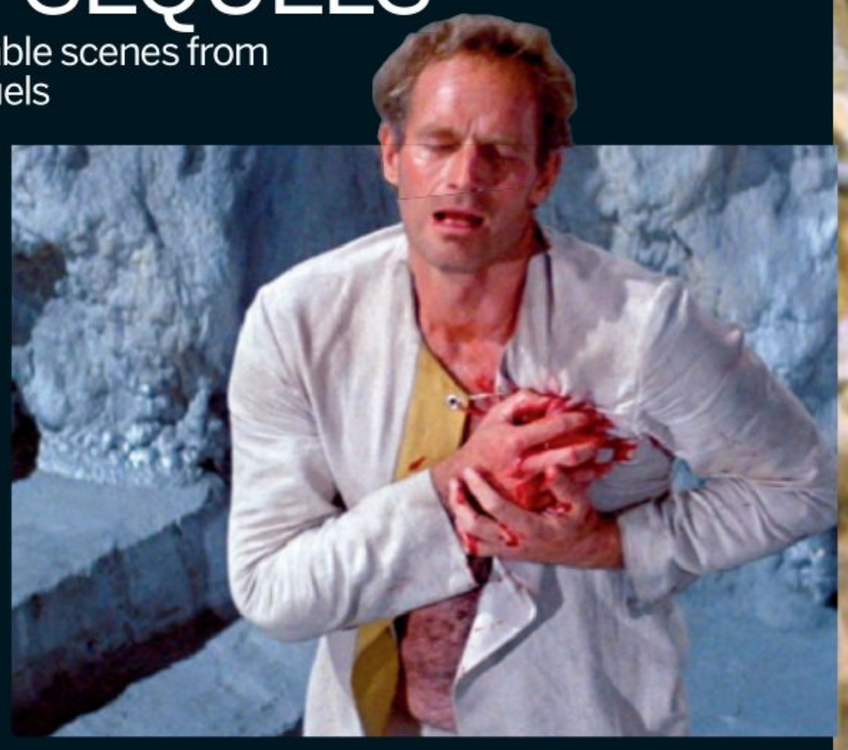
Lead actor, Charlton Heston was known for his noble or heroic roles in the likes of *The Ten Commandments*, *Touch Of Evil* and *Ben-Hur* at the time, but *Planet Of The Apes* saw him take control of a much less positive character. As George Taylor, Heston played an astronaut so cynical and deluded with 20th Century civilisation that he volunteers for an 18 month voyage, knowing that Earth will age several hundred years more before his return due to time dilation. Taylor hates his Earth so much that he is willing to risk losing it forever but he also retains a small hope that man will have stopped 'waging war on his brother' by the time that he returns.

When he does eventually land, however, Taylor finds himself on an unknown planet, which he believes is located 320 light years away from Earth. On this planet, humans are unspeaking primitives and the land is ruled by a race of civilised and intelligent speaking apes. These ape people take Taylor captive for scientific experimentation and the astronaut discovers, much to his horror, that this strange alien

SIMIAN SEQUELS

The most memorable scenes from the four Apes sequels

BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES



Charlton Heston bows out of the *Planet Of The Apes* series with a bang. Shot dead by one of Zaius's grunts he cries, "It's Armageddon", before falling on a detonator that sets off a nuclear bomb and destroys the whole planet.

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES

Just before the Earth's destruction, Zira and Cornelius escape into space and travel back in time to the 20th Century. There they are questioned in court and when Cornelius is asked if he can talk, he replies, "Only when she lets me", much to the amusement of the entire courtroom.

CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

After the murder of his adoptive human father, Caesar rebels against the human populace and musters a force of disenfranchised apes to riot and, potentially, kill. At the climax of the film he rallies against the oppression of his 'people' and swears to bring human society to its knees.

BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

After his young son is killed by a gorilla, Caesar battles the criminal in a high tree and pushes him to his death, breaking his own law that 'no ape shall kill ape'. From there he realises that he is no better than the humans and attempts to try and live in peace with them, even though the pre-destined future tells him this is ultimately an impossible feat.

Heston fought in vain to stop a sequel being made.

culture is just as cruel and hypocritical as the one he had sought to leave behind.

On the 'planet of the apes' he finds a society that is divided into three strict classes and a law that is governed by both science and religion – two doctrines that clearly, to Taylor, contradict each other. In effect, the ape culture holds a mirror up to our own, showing us just how ridiculous and petty human flaws really are by making them just unfamiliar enough. Much of the film sees Taylor trying to justify himself to the ruling class of orangutans, who wish to downplay his evolutionary significance and deny the existence of intelligent humans from the rest of the ape populace, in order to protect their own ideologies. Two individuals who take the chance to help defend Taylor are a scientist and archaeologist from the middle level chimp class, called Zira and Cornelius. Though members of a relatively privileged caste, the chimps have no real power and risk losing their careers by siding with a human as dangerous to ape culture as Taylor.

This conflict of ideals leads to one of the greatest scenes in *Planet Of The Apes*, where Taylor is put on trial in an ape court. Here he is subjected to a series of circular, illogical questions that prompt him to declare that some apes are "more equal than others" (a smart reference to Orwell's *Animal Farm*) and are ultimately designed to draw out more support from Zira and

ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES The various classes of ape society

ORANG-UTAN

The ginger-haired orang-utans are the ruling class of the ape world. Controlling both the legal system and the church, they have the power to do anything they like. Using the often-contradictory rules of their two institutions, they apply subtle pressures upon the other classes to keep them under control.

GORILLA

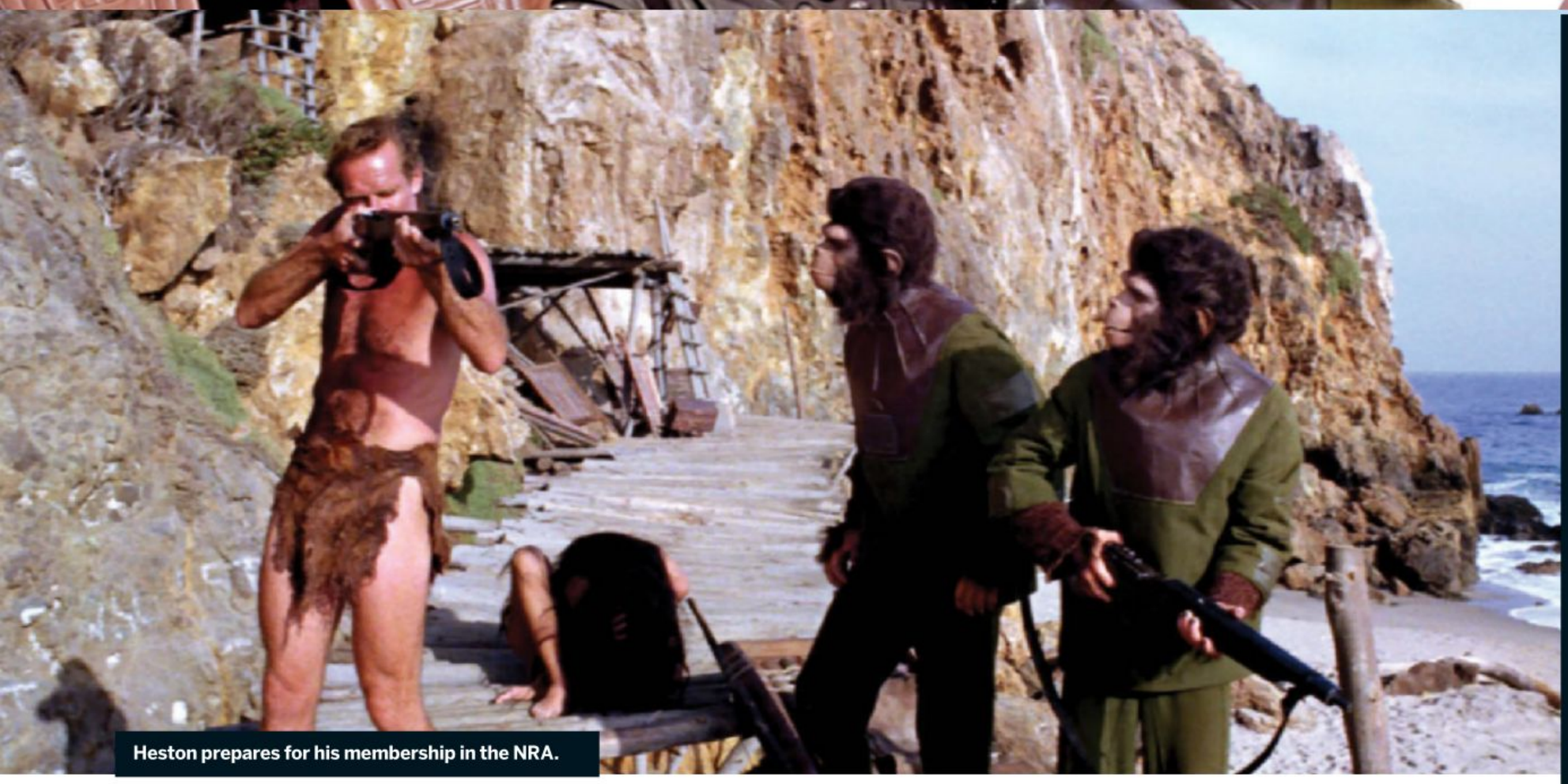
The working class of ape society, gorillas form the backbone of the nation, occupying positions throughout the military as well as the service industry. The gorillas are typically unquestioning and, when hunting for humans, will relish the opportunity to act cruelly. In the formative years of ape civilisation they fought for power with the other classes but ultimately lost out.

CHIMP

Chimpanzees occupy the middle level between the ape classes. They have no real power but live privileged lives and are well educated. Many chimps work in scholarly positions across the sciences, in schools and hospitals. They are mostly peaceful and their questioning nature sometimes lands them in trouble.

HUMAN

In the fictional future of *Planet Of The Apes*, humans have devolved to a primitive, instinctive state. They cannot speak and they roam the land freely, unclothed like animals. Apes hunt them for sport and capture them to be used as pets or experimented on in the interests of science.



Heston prepares for his membership in the NRA.

Cornelius and reveal the anti-establishment thoughts bubbling away within them.

The scene is reminiscent of the McCarthy hearings of the Fifties, which had led to *Apes* screenwriter Michael Wilson being blacklisted from Hollywood, where he was forced to work uncredited for eight years on works like *The Bridge On The River Kwai* and *Lawrence Of Arabia*. And Wilson wasn't the only one to weave his own experiences into the *Apes* screenplay. Co-writer Rod Serling had previously penned the *Twilight Zone* TV series, which often ran stories dealing with issues of racism and war, and was an outspoken supporter of the American Civil Liberties Union, which had lobbied for, among other things, a separation of Church and State.

All of these themes and influences found their way into *Planet Of The Apes*, but always in a very subtle way, and it was therefore not necessary to recognise them in order to simply watch and enjoy the film. Indeed, 20th Century Fox executive Richard D Zanuck, who was a producer at the time *Apes* was filmed, later revealed in a 1998 documentary that he was completely unaware of any commentary in the film and saw it only as an enjoyable family adventure with a science fiction slant.

"You know the saying, 'Human see, human do'"

In some ways Zanuck was right. Audiences flocked to cinemas to see *Planet Of The Apes*; attracted by the star appeal of Charlton Heston, they left marvelling at the incredibly believable ape make-up, enthralled by the dramatic story and shocked by the twist ending, which revealed that Taylor had been on a post-apocalyptic Earth all along. The film grossed over $32 million at the box office, nearly six times its budget. The film had become a phenomenon and, despite the script's conclusive ending, Fox demanded that a sequel be made. In fact, four sequels were made between 1970 and 1973, followed by a live-action TV series in 1974 and an animated show in 1975. As with most franchises, the quality of the *Apes* series steadily declined with the passing of each new entry. The talent of the original film moved on to bigger and better things, budgets were cut in line with the law of diminishing returns and a consistent tone was sacrificed, as producers shuffled directors and pushed for family-friendly ratings.

Two constants did remain throughout the sequels, however. Actor Roddy McDowall, who had played Cornelius in the first film, reprised the role in third film *Escape From The Planet Of The Apes* and took the role of Cornelius's son, Caesar, in

BEHIND THE MASKS

The lead apes and the actors who played them

ZIRA

Played by Kim Hunter

A formerly blacklisted Hollywood legend and supporter of the Civil Rights movement, Hunter identified with the commentary in *Apes* and relished the opportunity to play Zira in three of the films. In scenes that were shot from behind she kept the make-up on unnecessarily as she didn't feel in character without it.

CORNELIUS/CAESAR

Played by Roddy McDowall

This London-born actor appeared in four of the five films, twice as Cornelius and twice more as that character's son, Caesar. McDowall was instrumental in pioneering 'ape acting', which involved over-exaggerating every movement of the face so that it would convey through the make-up. In 1995 he admitted that the masks were so unbearable, they often reduced him to tears.

DR ZAIUS

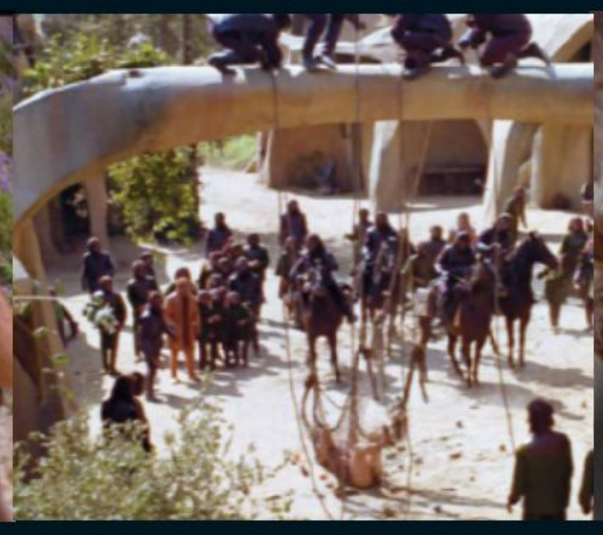
Played by Maurice Evans

Oscar winning actor Edward G Robinson was originally supposed to play Dr Zaius but dropped out after the initial test shots, complaining that he could not bear a whole shoot under the make-up. Maurice Evans was drafted in to replace him and did a terrific job in the first two movies.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PLANET OF THE APES

DIRTY APES

1 Taylor tries to escape from his captors and is chased all over the village by the military gorillas.



2 The gorillas eventually catch him in a net and hoist him into the air.

3 Regaining his voice he yells the immortal line, "Take your stinking paws off me, you damned dirty ape".

KISS GOODBYE

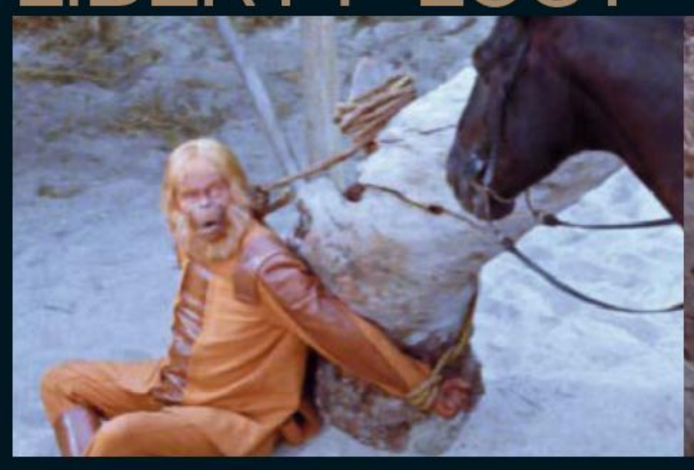
1 Taylor asks if he can kiss Zira goodbye, and she replies: "You're just so ugly."

2 He kisses the lady chimp anyway and she seems to thoroughly enjoy it.

3 Taylor and Zira's partners look on in horror at the inter-species kiss.

LIBERTY LOST

subheading



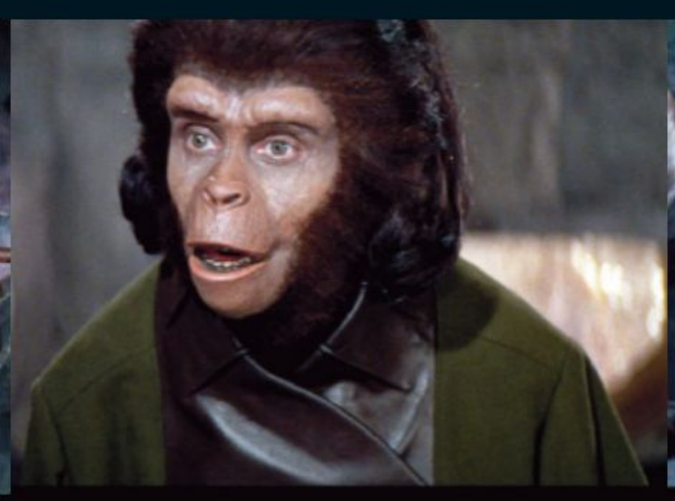
1 Before Taylor heads to the Forbidden Zone, Zaius warns he might not like what he finds.

2 Along the coast he discovers a half-destroyed Statue of Liberty, revealing that he's been on Earth all along.

3 "You maniacs! You blew it up! Ah, damn you! God damn you all to hell."

NO EVIL

1 Taylor is taken to court to be tried for no apparent crime other than his existence.



2 Zira gives a rather convincing argument that criticises the orang-utans' beliefs.

3 Unable to accept what she says, the orang-utans regress into three very familiar positions.

The apes drove cars in the novel but rode horses in the film.

The *Apes* series was not afraid to be disturbing.

Beneath introduced mutant humans into the mix.

Ricardo Montalban (*Star Trek*'s Khan) in another classic sci-fi role.

WHO IS PIERRE BOULLE?

The man behind the Monkey Planet

Born February 1912, Pierre Boulle was a great French novelist, best remembered for two books that were later adapted into films. One was the classic *Bridge On The River Kwai* (1952) and the other was *Monkey Planet* (1963), which was later adapted into *Planet Of The Apes*. Boulle fought in the French army during World War II and remarkably became a secret agent in China and Burma. In 1943 he was captured by Vichy France loyalists and was subjected to forced labour and cruel treatment, which eventually influenced the writing of both of his most famous novels.

Interestingly, Boulle wrote an ending for *Monkey Planet* that was very different to the one used in the *Planet Of The Apes* film. In Boulle's ending the Monkey Planet is *not* Earth but when main character, Ulysse, later escapes, he eventually finds his way back to Earth to find that his planet has ironically evolved to the point where apes rule. Boulle later admitted that he preferred the more shocking ending of the film and that he wished he'd come up with it himself.

Though Boulle's involvement with the *Apes* franchises extends only to the book and its adaptation, he was commissioned to write a sequel, which he called *Planet Of The Men*, but it was turned down by 20th Century Fox and never developed beyond the script stage. In 1994, Boulle died in his home country, aged 82.

Conquest Of The Planet Of The Apes and *Battle For The Planet Of The Apes*. Behind the scenes, screenwriter Paul Dehn was hired to scribe each sequel and did a fair job of keeping the franchise's political edge sharp.

Though some of the sequels were a little heavy handed with their allegory – see *Beneath The Planet Of The Apes*' focus on military protest and nuclear war – others were just as effective as the original film. *Escape From The Planet Of The Apes*, in particular, is an interesting case. It flips the scenario of the first film on its head, landing Cornelius and Zira on 20th Century Earth and following their exploits as outsiders in our own world. At first the pair become media celebrities, as America becomes fascinated by the talking primates, but things soon take a turn for the sinister. When Zira and Cornelius are taken shopping and are dressed up in the clothes of their new benefactors, it's treated as a lighthearted joke but there is an underlying current to the scene that drags up uncomfortable parallels with the objectification of black people during 18th Century colonialism. Furthermore, the apes are tolerated when they are nothing more than a novelty source of amusement but as soon as Zira reveals that she is pregnant, she becomes a threat to the humans as the seeds of a new, potentially dominant, race are sown.

In *Conquest Of The Planet Of The Apes* the timeline jumps forward by a few decades to catch up with Earth after the murder of Cornelius and Zira, and what we see is the most disturbing yet most socially realistic scenario so far. The world of *Conquest* is a distant future of our own, in which America is ruled by a neo-fascist state on the brink of totalitarianism. Ape kind has evolved since the arrival of Zira and Cornelius, and though it hasn't yet reached the full mental capacity seen in the earlier films, the race has become enough of a threat for humans to take drastic action against them. Many are confined to labour camps while the 'privileged' few have become the personal slaves of the upper classes. Among this powerless mass of ape people hides Caesar, the speech-capable son of Cornelius, who eventually becomes so bitter at his people's mistreatment that he plots a revolution to overthrow mankind.

Interestingly, *Conquest* is both a sequel and a prequel to the original *Planet Of The Apes*. Though it follows the offspring of Zira and Cornelius, it does so after that pair had travelled back in time. So when Caesar forms a rebellion against his human slave masters he is actually orchestrating the downfall of the human race and has put into motion the events that lead to the civilisation that Taylor discovers when he crash lands on the planet many centuries in the future.

This infinite-loop timeline has since been criticised

The make-up is one of many of *Apes*' triumphs.

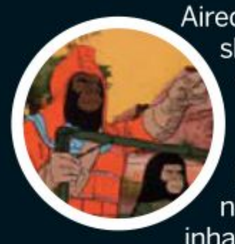
AND THE REST...

Further adventures of the apes

TV SERIES

As the profitability of the films declined, Fox moved *Apes* to TV screens with this short-lived live-action series. Of the 14 episodes that were filmed, only 13 were shown before the programme was cancelled. The series as a whole is unremarkable but it did star Roddy McDowall as Galen, in his third unique ape role.

CARTOON

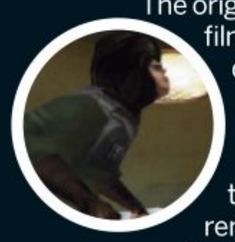


Aired the year after the TV show, the animation was called *Return To The Planet Of The Apes* and featured a planet more in line with the Pierre Boulle novel, in which the apes inhabit a futuristic society, driving cars and piloting their own personal aircraft.

COMICS

Twelve different publishers across the world, including the UK, US, Japan and Hungary, have produced their own official *Planet Of The Apes* comics but the most famous is probably the Marvel series, which ran between 1974 and 1977 and was later reprinted by Marvel UK.

VIDEOGAMES



The original *Planet Of The Apes* film was made about a decade before the advent of videogames and missed out on an official adaptation. Around the time of Tim Burton's remake, however, Ubisoft made the decision to produce a game based on the 1968 original for PC, PlayStation and Game Boy.

by some fans for creating a predestination paradox, in which the rules of causality contradict the situation, but there is something rather poetic about the way in which the fates of humans and apes are intertwined so. Unfortunately, however, that circular timeline was monkeyed with a little when Fox got cold feet over the final film, *Battle For The Planet Of The Apes*. Although box-office takings for *Conquest* were profitable, some audiences reacted poorly to the film's overly violent riot scenes and the overall pessimistic flavour. Attempting to rein the franchise back in toward family fun, Fox demanded that *Battle* be much more palatable than *Conquest*, which created some problems for the timeline that writer Paul Dehn had created.

Set somewhere between the ape revolution and the arrival of Taylor on the planet, and knowing that this would be the last film, the natural story to tell would have been the destruction of the human race as an intelligent civilisation. Fox's wishes prevented such an apocalyptic ending, however, and instead, *Battle* concluded with the now dominant apes trying to get along with the few surviving, still speaking, humans. Only the film's final shot – a crying statue of Caesar – hinted at the doom that the character (and audience) knew was surely around the corner.

And there the classic *Planet Of The Apes* films came to an end. In some ways this was a shame, as few, if any other, big franchises ever dared to tackle such a wide range of social and political issues while also turning a profit. In other ways, however, it was clear that the series could not continue in its current form. During pre-production on the second film, *Beneath The Planet Of The Apes*, Fox had trouble convincing Charlton Heston to return. Heston agreed to make a cameo at the beginning and end of the film only, on the condition that they kill off his character and that the film end with the destruction of the planet. Heston feared that the original movie would be devalued by endless sequels that degrade the property into the equivalent of a Saturday morning serial.

Heston's demands did nothing to stop the franchise marching on, of course, and though Paul Dehn kept the political commentary rolling, the overall quality did decline. Fox's insistence on focus testing the sequels led to some severe cuts, particularly in *Conquest*, which had its ending re-written and its opening credits sequence, depicting brutality against the ape slaves, was completely removed. The move toward more family-friendly content was directly at odds with the thematics of the franchise, while the regular budget cuts made the films look increasingly shoddy. Some of the big crowd scenes in *Beneath*

TIMELINE OF THE APES

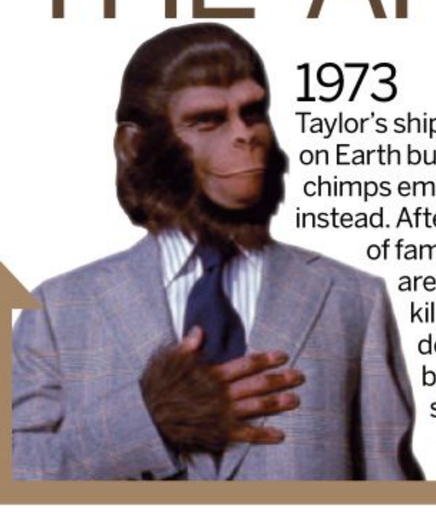
The story of the films put into chronological order

1972

Taylor and his crew embark on an exploratory mission into deep space and, seemingly, never return.

1972

Astronaut Brent is sent on a reconnaissance mission to track the missing Taylor. He too never returns.

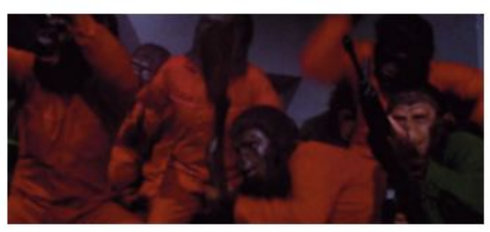


1973

Taylor's ship lands back on Earth but three talking chimps emerge from it instead. After a brief period of fame, the apes are eventually killed, but they do leave a child behind with a sympathetic circus owner.

1991

That baby chimp grows up and names himself Caesar. By this point humans have enslaved apes and Caesar sets out to free them and subjugate the humans.



2001

The Earth is ravaged by nuclear war, leaving only a few humans and apes alive. Apes rule under Caesar and a few humans unsuccessfully battle for freedom.

Escape attempted to show prejudice in a new light.

Episode IV was nominated for a Best

Later films made the best of a reduced budget.

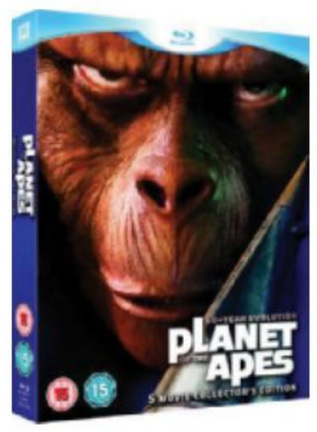
required the ape actors to wear cost-effective masks that looked laughable compared to the prosthetics of the lead actors. Later films cut the number of on-screen apes down to a minimum and used the setting of contemporary America in order to cut costs even further and, by the final film, director J Lee Thompson was forced to film the climactic combat sequences using close-ups and fast cuts in order to mask the fact that very few extras and vehicles were in use.

If the *Planet Of The Apes* series had come to a complete halt with *Battle* then the series might garner more respect today than it currently gets. Sadly, however, the apes have kept coming back for more and have never managed to regain the credibility they built in 1968. After considering a sixth film in 1973, Fox decided instead to pursue *Apes* through the medium of television. A live-action TV series was broadcast in 1974, followed by a cartoon by the name of *Return To The Planet Of The Apes* the next year. And though Seventies kids may remember these action-adventure serials with fondness, the TV shows did nothing to help the flagging franchise. Relying heavily on formulaic plot and lacking any of the films' thematic substance, they are best forgotten as part of the larger *Apes* property. Likewise, Tim Burton's 2001 remake of the original film, though visually accomplished and featuring a strong cast, was panned by critics and confused audiences with its new twist ending, that was actually closer to the one in the original Pierre Boulle novel.

In 2011 the franchise climbed back on top with Rupert Wyatt's *Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes* proving the summer's wildcard hit, and a sequel – *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* – arrived in 2014. Despite a heavyweight cast, including Gary Oldman and Kodi Smit-McPhee, director Wyatt dropped out over concerns that the follow-up was being rushed in order to hit a 2014 release (he was replaced by with *Cloverfield* director Matt Reeves), which seems an ill omen for a series more moving back into the blockbuster limelight. Nevertheless, *Dawn* was released to significant acclaim, though whether this return to form will continue through to its upcoming sequel remains to be seen.

Indeed, if there's one thing that all the *Apes* movies have in common it's that they all end on a downbeat note and with some uncertainty over where we will go from here. It would be wrong to end this feature in any other way.

"You Maniacs! You blew it up! Ah, damn you! God damn you all to hell!"



PLANET OF THE APES: 5 MOVIE COLLECTOR'S EDITION is available on DVD and Blu-ray from 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment priced at £8.99.

2600
An orang-utan known as The Lawgiver lays down the principle laws of ape society, removing any account of the previous human civilisation from public record.

3978
Taylor crash lands on the planet after 2006 years in space. He has hardly aged at all due to the effects of time dilation.

3978
Brent lands on the planet a few months after Taylor. He eventually tracks him down only moments before the destruction of the planet.

3978
Zira, Cornelius and Dr Milo escape the planet in Taylor's ship just before it is destroyed and travel back in time to 1973.

26

THE DELOREAN

The car turned time machine, powered by flux capacitor and 1.21 gigawatts of electricity, is far from reliable, but that doesn't stop us wanting one

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
SPEED OR RANGE: ★★★★★

■ IT'S DIFFICULT – and somewhat distressing – to envision *Back To The Future* without Doc's DeLorean DMC-12 turned time machine, but this was almost the case with the initial idea pitched to focus on a laser device attached to a fridge. Chosen for its spaceship-like vibe, thanks to the gullwing doors, the DeLorean is as recognised for time travel as the TARDIS – and certainly looks cooler. Its malfunctions and flaws are part of the charm, and when sparks fly – and, later, the car too – as it reaches 88 mph, it's obvious the trilogy wouldn't have been the same – or undoubtedly anywhere near as successful – without it.

THE DELOREAN

A CAR DOOMED FOR FAILURE ON THE US MARKET WOULD BECOME A FUTURISTIC SCI-FI TOUCHSTONE IN THE BACK TO THE FUTURE FRANCHISE, UNQUESTIONABLY EMBEDDING ITSELF IN AMERICAN CULTURE FOREVER. IF YOU'RE GOING TO BUILD A TIME MACHINE, WHY NOT DO IT IN STYLE?

When you see the DeLorean, you see adventure. The car used by Doctor Emmett 'Doc' Brown to take Marty McFly back to 1955, forward to 2015 then back again to 1885 is a cornerstone of both *Back To The Future* and Americana, a vehicle that encapsulates the over-the-top futurism of the Eighties. With vertically opening gull-wing doors, a sleek shape and aircraft-style stainless steel rims and faceplates, the DeLorean is a snapshot of things to come from a car manufacturer with arguably too much ambition, and not enough foresight to realise it. This was a vehicle destined to be a cautionary tale for automotive companies and enthusiasts until, by chance, it turned up in the third draft of a script in one of the biggest movies of the Eighties, which would forever elevate it to cult status.

On paper, the car should have been a real-world success. Talented car executive John DeLorean had walked out of a possible presidency at General Motors when he formed his own company, DeLorean Motor Cars of America, in 1975. By the following year, he'd engineered a prototype vehicle known as the DMC-12, with an incredible exterior designed by the ingenious Giorgetto Giugiaro. While the finished version would only retain several elements of this original version, the doors, skin and engine remained intact. By the time the finished version was ready in 1981, it had gone through a turbulent development, with a reportedly high turnover of executives and financial issues with production going on behind the scenes.

The irony surrounding the actual DeLorean, officially known as the DMC-12, is that it became a notorious failure upon its release, with only 6,000 units sold of 9,000 produced – less than half of the production goal. The vehicle flopped on the US market, released at a time when the US motor trade itself was in freefall. Produced in Belfast, the car needed to sell several thousand more to break even, and as a stock option fell through in 1981, the company was suddenly running low on capital. This situation wasn't helped by reports of faulty vehicles, which swallowed up a lot of cash in quality assurance work, while a tax break from the local government was also the subject of much scrutiny. DeLorean himself was embroiled in a drug scandal in 1982 – which he was later acquitted of – an FBI sting operation that required more of his personal finances,

leading to the company's collapse that same year.

So, what does this have to do with *Back To The Future*? Well, the car is such an oddity within the making of the film, as its use in Bob Gale's third draft emerged from a single joke, which would inadvertently alter the car's reputation forever. Prior to using the DeLorean, the first draft of the film featured a car wash-like laser device, Spielberg described to *Empire* in 2010, while a refrigerator-like chamber was also dismissed at the behest of Spielberg (and later conceptually picked up by the dreadful *Indiana Jones And The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull*). Eventually, a car was settled upon, as it allowed the characters to move anywhere, while the DeLorean was specifically chosen because the people of 1955 could plausibly believe it to be a spaceship; essentially, the only reason it was picked was for that one joke where the Peabodys believe Marty is an alien. It really is that simple.

By the time the film roared onto the scene in 1985 and repopularised the car, DMC was already long gone, those 9,000 units being the last that the market would ever see (in addition to a few limited edition 'gold' versions).

The plutonium power for the actual time machine portion of the vehicle came from the belief that Doc Brown would have been the kind of nutjob to work on the Manhattan project. The back of the vehicle was retrofitted by the production crew, of course, to make it look time travel-enabled in a homemade kind of way – but the look of the vehicle, as commissioned by DeLorean and designed by Giugiaro, was still there. The flux capacitor might make time travel possible, but it was the DMC-12 that got Marty and the Doc to their destination.

The car played a vital role on the superb promotional posters for the film, such was its relevance within the story, while the third instalment even used it as a major plot device. To the audience, it took on a life of its own, and it would quickly become a big merchandising draw for the franchise.

Yet, in the making of the first film, the actual DeLorean model as it was had to be adjusted in order to suit the story's needs. Due to the fact that the vehicle was too small on the inside to fit a camera in, the production crew had to cut one apart and expand it to do the interior shots on the first film as they needed to. A different vehicle was used for exterior shots. In a 2008 interview, screenwriter Bob Gale revealed that the first movie had three DeLoreans, and the third needed six. This included the two remaining intact from the original film, the version they built for interior shots, two extra cars they purchased, and another constructed from fibreglass to be

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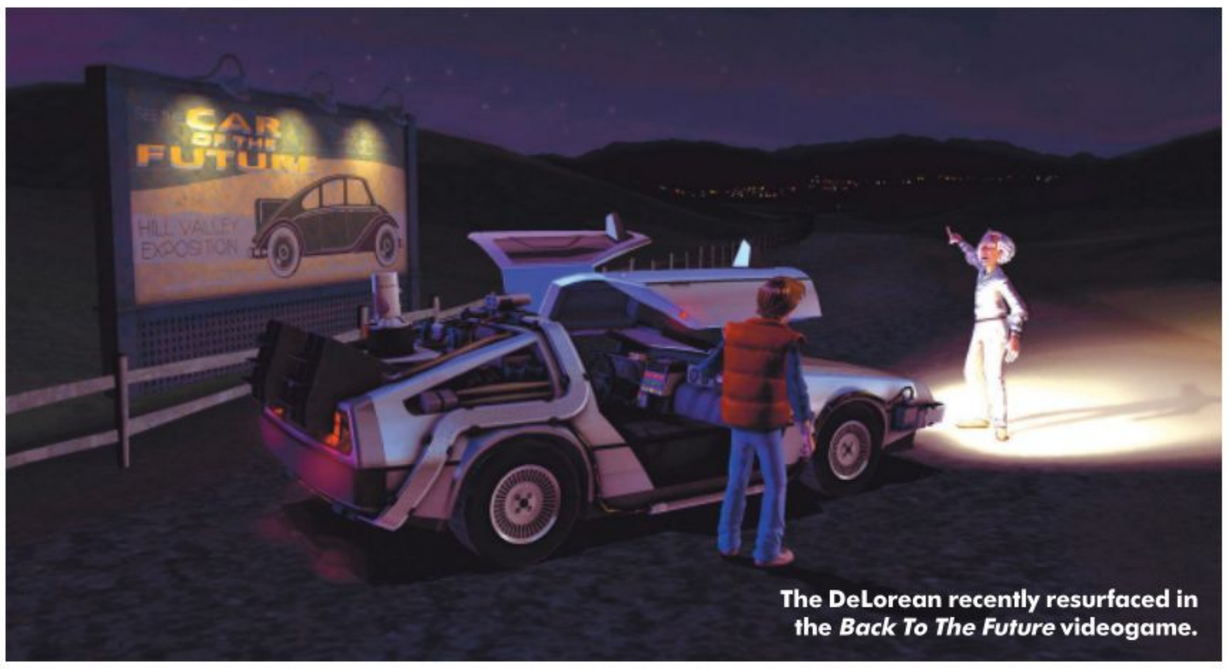


The DeLorean recently resurfaced in the *Back To The Future* videogame.

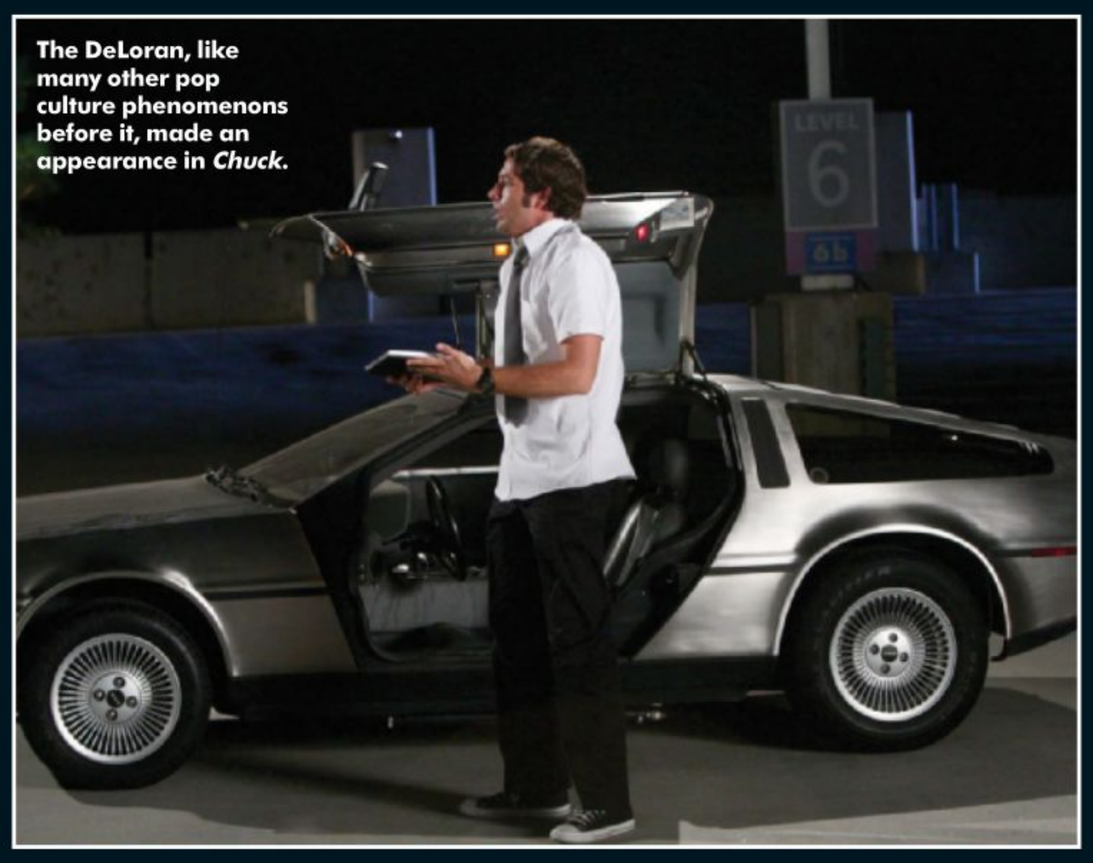
A TALE OF TWO DELOREANS

BACK TO THE FUTURE'S GREATEST PLOT HOLE, AND HOW THE CREATORS EXPLAINED THEIR WAY OUT OF IT

The 'Two DeLoreans' problem is arguably the most famous of all the *Back To The Future* paradoxes that are so fun to dwell on. If Doc needed to get the DeLorean up to 88mph, then why didn't he just get the fuel from the car he came in on and kept hidden in the Delgado mine? Well, there are two explanations: one that states he'd likely drained the fluids, and another that says going to the mine might have created a paradox, if there were cave-ins and such. Back in issue 55 of SciFiNow, screenwriter Bob Gale broke it all down for us. "First is the car mechanic's answer: if you're going to put a vehicle in storage for a period of years, it's imperative that all the fluids be drained from the car. Doc certainly knew this and would have done this. In *Part III*, 1955 Doc specifically says he put gas in the tank… he wouldn't have said this if there already WAS gas in the tank. The second answer is the 'Avoid Paradox' answer: If Doc was to unearth the DeLorean which he'd just buried a few months ago, and if he accidentally did damage to it, this could cause a paradox which – you guessed it – could destroy the universe!" All of which contributes to the continued fascination surrounding the DeLorean, of course, even if we're not quite swayed by either argument…

CAMEO CAR

THE DELOREAN HAS PERMEATED POPULAR CULTURE IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS THANKS TO BACK TO THE FUTURE AND ITS FASCINATING BACKGROUND. HERE'S JUST A FEW OF THE CAMEOS IT HAS MADE OVER THE YEARS…



The DeLoran, like many other pop culture phenomenons before it, made an appearance in *Chuck*.

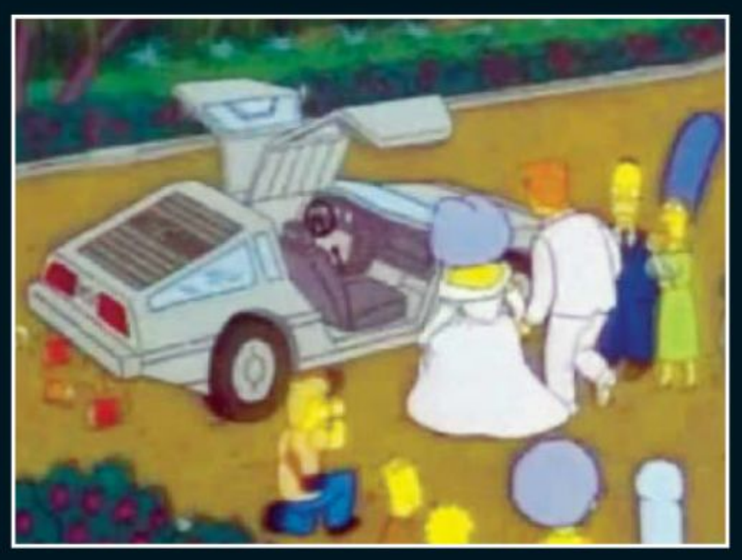
Chuck ▲

'CHUCK VERSUS THE DELOREAN' (SEASON TWO)

You can rely on *Chuck* to turn a pop culture reference into the basis for an entire episode. In 'Chuck Versus The DeLorean', his best friend Morgan borrows money off Captain Awesome and purchases the car. Unfortunately, it's a wreck, stalling at a mere 22mph.

Videogames ▶

Included in driving connoisseur games like *Burnout Paradise*, *Gran Turismo 5* and *Driver: San Francisco* as an unlockable vehicle, often with 88mph references. Of course, the DeLorean also appears prominently in the *Back To The Future* game.



The Simpsons ◀

'A FISH CALLED SELMA' (SEASON SEVEN)

Washed-up movie star Troy McClure drives a DeLorean, even whacking Chief Wiggum in the face with its vertical doors. McClure is the ultimate cast-off from the Eighties, and the car matches his persona.

The car has popped in numerous games, including *Burnout Paradise*.

American Dad ▲

'DELOREAN STORY-AN' (SEASON FIVE)

An episode of the Fox comedy saw the characters Stan and Steve Smith retrieving the last parts of a DeLorean to complete their vehicle, but they soon encounter another collector seeking the same part. One scene features a music cue that is a direct reference to the *Back To The Future* films.

Honourable Mentions ◀

The DeLorean has also turned up in *The Fairly OddParents*; it was discussed extensively in the Judd Apatow movie *Knocked Up*; Kanye West mentions it in the catchy-but-still-trashy song *Good Morning*; the Beastie Boys short film *Fight For Your Right Revisited*, and so many more…

The car functioned as a major plot device in *Back To The Future Part III*.

The DeLorean is a pivotal part of the saga's image.

"WERE IT A TIME-TRAVELLING FERRARI, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN SOMETHING CYNICAL ABOUT IT"

destroyed. Only three cars from the films exist today: one could be found by the Universal Studios *Back To The Future* ride in Orlando, Florida until 2008, but all three now belong to private collectors.

The strange truth is that the films could only have worked with that car. Were it a time-travelling Ferrari or Mercedes, there would have been something cynical about it – the obscurity of the car added immensely to its appeal. There's something golden about the idea of a vehicle so niche and distinctive blowing up into this big pop culture icon overnight, but that's exactly what happened. You can be certain that most of the current DeLorean owners around the world took an interest in the car because of the movies.

Back To The Future is like The Muppets – seemingly everybody loves it, and that cross-generation appeal applied to the DeLorean. Despite the low sales of the actual vehicle, being coupled to the movies was beneficial for DeLorean's reputation, with licensing royalties helping the DMC executive fight several ensuing lawsuits after his acquittal. DeLorean wrote a letter to Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale in 1985, thanking them for keeping his dream alive and ensuring the DMC-12 would be remembered forever among *Back To The Future* viewers.

The car encapsulates that Eighties version of the future we associate with the films, the kind of loveable, over-the-top quality that strikes a chord with any film fan, regardless of when they happen to encounter the *Back To The Future* franchise. On the flipside, this was a vehicle in the real world that was fraught with problems; one man's daring, unique vision that was chewed up by both reality and chronic misfortune.

DeLorean was a man who didn't believe in failure, and even though he declared bankruptcy in 1999, he kept attempting to resuscitate DMC through various means up until his death in 2005 (an image of the DMC-12 is engraved on DeLorean's gravestone). Perhaps, with his car's cult status in mind, he didn't really fail at all. His vehicle, designed as it was, lives on through a series of movies that really are timeless, and without the car masterminded by this intriguing automotive creator, it wouldn't be the same film. The car represents the attitude of the films on so many different levels, and its customisation into a time machine by Doc Brown is a perfect symbol of his eccentricity, to choose a vehicle that most people would have completely forgotten about. It's a freak legacy that few but the greatest successes in automobile design will ever be able to match. Not bad for a car that sank a business.

The Back To The Future Trilogy is out on Blu-ray from Universal Pictures. *Back To The Future: The Game* is available on iOS, PC and PS3 from Telltale Games.

THE DINOSAURS

27

STEVEN SPIELBERG

With a career spanning almost 50 years, the director, screenwriter and producer's one of the most influential filmmakers ever; and worth a measly $3 billion

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★½
CRITICAL ACCLAIM: ★★★★★
WRITING SKILLS: ★★★½★
PRODUCTION SKILLS: ★★★★★

■ REMEMBER HOW your heart pounded when the T-Rex was chasing the jeep? How you wept when ET was on death's door? How you've never quite gotten over your fear of sharks? Well, the multi-award winning, world renowned director's to thank for many of our all time favourite films, within the sci-fi circle and surrounding it. His impact on the movie industry is undeniable; his influence reaching countless directors, including JJ Abrams, Ridley Scott, Guillermo del Toro and James Cameron. His love for sequels may, at times, prove a momentary blip, but that hasn't stopped him lining his mantelpiece with three Oscars, as well as add numerous nominations and awards to his CV.

"ET REMAINS ONE OF THE BEST-LOVED MOVIES TO BE BEAMED OUT OF HOLLYWOOD"

28
ET

Everyone's favourite friendly alien is most famous for his cycling/flying escapades, an obsession with phones and a, both cool, and kind of creepy, glowing finger

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ SPIELBERG'S MOVIE has been showered with praise, awards and nominations, undoubtedly thanks to its less than human lead, ET, who was based on the director's own imaginary, childhood friend. The cuddly alien was a rare example of a gracious extraterrestrial, who didn't want to take over Earth, only to find his way back home. Arriving so soon after the first *Alien* movie, ET was the Yin to the xenomorph's Yang, helping extinguish some of our fears about life outside Earth and, perhaps for the first time, encouraging us to pine for an alien chum like we would for a puppy or pony. Who could possibly deny the loveable, little fellow a phone after he asks so politely?

E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL is available on DVD and Blu-ray from Universal Pictures UK priced £5 and £9.35.

ET WAS THE UNFORGETTABLE TALE OF AN AFFABLE ALIEN WHOSE FLEETING VISIT TO EARTH LEFT A HUGE CROP CIRCLE SIZED IMPRESSION ON A BOY CALLED ELLIOTT AND THE REST OF THE WORLD ALONG WITH HIM. WE RE-VISIT THE PREMIER MARTIAN MOVIE THAT MADE US ALL WISH FOR A CLOSE ENCOUNTER

WHY EVERYBODY LOVES ET

"I feel like I made my most personal film in 1982 with *ET*, and today I think it remains my most personal film", says director Steven Spielberg on the *ET: The Extra-Terrestrial* Special Edition DVD. The 1982 friendly alien flick is within grasp of its 30th anniversary, made with a primitive puppet and little in the way of special effects, yet it has aged remarkably well, and still remains one of the best loved movies to be beamed out of Hollywood. "The kids in the movie are combinations of myself and my family growing up", Spielberg admits. "I think that *ET* was really about the divorce of my parents. At the time, I never once said this, but I came out and confessed about ten years ago."

ET was the tale of an extra-terrestrial on a peaceful mission to collect foliage for his home planet, who is inadvertently left behind when government officials crash the plant parade. Ten-year-old Elliott is the middle child in a family that is missing a father. This hole is filled by the discovery of the alien in his garden shed, who he dubs 'ET', and quickly enters into a friendship with. Up until the film's release, cinema was being invaded by evil visitors from outer space, including Spielberg's own *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* in 1977. *ET* changed everything. "I had been living with this story for so many years, before *Close Encounters*", says Spielberg. "It wasn't always going to be called *ET*, but it was always going to be about a boy who finds an alien. I pretty much had it worked out when I asked Melissa Mathison to write it when we were making *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*… Melissa first turned me down and said 'I'm not a writer', so we all worked on her, [producer] Kathleen Kennedy worked on her, until finally she relented and said 'OK I'll write it!'." It's difficult to comprehend now that the title could be anything else, but in the very beginning it was dubbed 'A Boy's Life'.

Elliott is joined by younger sister Gertie (Drew Barrymore) and older brother Michael (Robert MacNaughton). Their mother Mary (played by Dee Wallace) was the only adult seen from the waist up for the first half of the movie. This decision was inspired by Tex Avery's cartoons, which made it clear that this was a movie about the children and their relationship with this otherworldly being. To enhance the realism of this relationship, Spielberg ensured that all wires emitting from the puppet, and the team operating the creature, were hidden from the actors' view. The movie was also shot in chronological order so the child actors' friendship and feelings for their 'colleague' grew exponentially until they reached the climactic scenes where ET is dying, and real tears were spilling freely from the youngsters' eyes. "I remember knowing deep down that ET wasn't real, but he had become my friend", admitted Barrymore, who was only six when she played Gertie, on the Special Edition DVD. "I thought the doctors were hurting him." The doctors in this scene were all actually from Spielberg's medical team, as part of his masterplan to have the movie look as convincing as possible. It was a true sign ⇨

FIVE CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

The best moments from ET: The Extra-Terrestrial

HAVE YOU MET MY FRIEND ET?

Elliott prepares Michael to meet ET by making him declare that he has 'absolute power', and then closing his eyes. Things don't go to plan, however, when an unsuspecting Gertie walks into the room and screams, which triggers a screaming reflex in everyone, including ET.

T IT REALLY WAS THE FIRST TIME ACTOR ROBERT MACNAUGHTON SAW ET, SO THE STUNNED REACTION WAS AUTHENTIC.

PSYCHIC POWERS

As ET and Elliott grow closer, they begin to share a psychic connection. This becomes apparent when he's in class, and ET is at home exploring the pitfalls of beer and daytime television. Elliott belches, starts slurring his words, and ends up in a classroom clinch thanks to a romance scene ET is watching.

T HARRISON FORD APPEARS IN A DELETED SCENE, REPRIMANDING ELLIOTT FOR HIS UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR.

FANCY A RIDE?

ET takes his new best friend for a bicycle ride through the night sky, accompanied by lots of youthful yelling. This scene created that indelible image of the duo silhouetted against the full moon, and the whimsical score playing in the background adds to the fairytale-like feeling of this childhood classic.

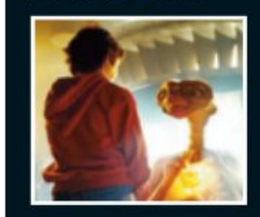
T THIS IMAGE OF ET RIDING IN THE BASKET OF ELLIOTT'S BICYCLE BECAME THE TRADEMARK LOGO FOR AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT.

HAPPY HALLOWEEEN!

ET experiences Halloween from underneath a white sheet in a scene that was extended in the re-released version. This isn't the only time the alien gets to play dress-up, as a few moments alone with Gertie reveal. Elliott comes home to find him clad as an elderly woman, and argues that ET should be reserved some dignity.

T THERE'S A BEHIND-THE-SCENES MOMENT ON THE DVD WHERE SPIELBERG DRESSES AS AN OLD LADY LIKE ET FOR THE KIDS' AMUSEMENT.

BE GOOD



The spaceship is here, and it's that time in the movie to say goodbye to the loveable alien. Adorably, he gives the flowers he brought back to life to Gertie, and tells her to 'Be good', which were the first words he learnt while watching a kid's TV show. When he points to Elliott and says 'I'll be right here', you'll be choked up.

T *ET* IS MOSTLY SHOT FROM A CHILD'S EYE-LEVEL TO ALLOW A GREATER CONNECTION BETWEEN ELLIOTT AND ET COME ACROSS.

Few films have provided as many stand-out and iconic moments as *ET*.

that he believed in his vision, and wanted everyone else to see it as clearly.

Perhaps the most crucial part of conveying this authenticity was to make the titular character affable and sympathetic, despite being an obvious outsider. "I wanted ET to be special, I didn't want him to look like aliens from other movies", Spielberg recalls. "I wanted him to look so anatomically different that the audience would say 'there is no way there's a person in a suit with a zipper at the back'. That's why I wanted to make the neck very slender and long." The filmmaker used this extendable neck to convey the alien's trust in his new young companions when he reveals this vulnerable part during the closet scene. His appearance was the work of Carlo Rambaldi, an Italian special effects artist who was known for his work on *Alien* and *King Kong*. In the end, though, it was *ET* he would become best recognised for. The appearance of the loveable alien was inspired by his own painting, titled *Women Of Delta*, which shared the wrinkly wide head balanced on a tube-like neck. Mathison claims to have never thought about the planet where ET hailed from, but because he was visiting Earth as part of a botany trip, it made sense that he looked 'muddy'. Being an alien granted him special powers, too, which are revealed when Elliott slices his finger and ET heals it with his own glowing digit. "Healing was something that came up pretty early", says Mathison on the DVD commentary, "actually, I remember that I asked kids what kind of super power they would want, either to have themselves or to have this man from outer space to have and healing came up a lot. He could take care of hurts."

Bringing this extraordinary character to life were two dwarfs, as well as a pre-teen boy called Matthew De Meritt, who was born without legs and had mastered walking on his hands. Meritt filmed the scene where ET stumbles through the kitchen drunk before falling flat on his face. The team had to take turns in wearing the costume, of which the head alone weighed 15 pounds. Of course, if the movie had been made today, the extra-terrestrial would have probably been fashioned out of CGI. This obviously

"I FEEL LIKE I MADE MY MOST PERSONAL FILM WITH ET"
STEVEN SPIELBERG

WE COME IN PEACE
The aliens you wouldn't mind landing in your back garden

What is your favourite alien invasion flick? Let us know on the forum at www.scifinow.co.uk/forum

SPOCK

Spock serves aboard the USS Enterprise in *Star Trek,* and is half-human, half-Vulcan. He wouldn't be too difficult to disguise, as it is only his pointy ears that give his alien heritage away. His Vulcan side makes Spock prone to reason and logic with no emotional interference.

THE VULCAN NERVE PINCH ALLOWS SPOCK TO OVERPOWER ENEMIES WITHOUT VIOLENCE. IT WAS CREATED BY ACTOR LEONARD NIMOY.

EWOKS

A species this adorable could never harbour an evil agenda. This teddy-bear-like race come from the forest moon of Endor, appearing in *Return Of The Jedi*. It is thanks to their help that the Battle of Endor against the Galactic Empire ended in victory.

THE EWOKS ARE NAMED AFTER THE MIWOK, A NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBE, INDIGENOUS TO THE REDWOOD FOREST.

CLANGERS

The Clangers don't do Earth visits; they prefer to reside on a blue planet that resembles the Moon. These mice-like creatures speak in whistles, feast on soup made by the Soup Dragon, and enjoy living in harmony. This stop animation was broadcast on the BBC from 1969-1972.

THEY ARE CALLED CLANGERS AFTER THE SOUND THE DOOR (DUSTBIN LID) TO THEIR BURROWS MADE WHEN IT WAS OPENED.

Nobody can forget the tear-jerking ending.

occurred to Spielberg, who re-released the film for its 20th anniversary with digitally re-mastered scenes. This cosmetic surgery was extremely subtle out of respect for Rambaldi's original creation, but ILM's CGI ET (acronym overload) enabled more accurate facial expressions that allowed for the inclusion of a bath scene that was previously cut because the puppet looked too 'stiff'. The gun-toting government officials seen in the original movie had bothered Spielberg, especially after his first child was born, so these were removed and replaced with walkie-talkies. There was also a line where the mother forbids her son to go out dressed as a 'terrorist', but post 9/11 this was replaced with the word 'hippy'. One scene that remained on the cutting room floor was a cameo from Harrison Ford as the school Principal. Ford had just finished working with Spielberg on *Raiders,* and he was married to writer Melissa Mathison at the time, but despite the scene concealing his famous face, the director felt it would be too distracting for the audience.

Ultimately, this re-release is an opportunity to appreciate how dark the film actually is. Its depiction of suburbia isn't the pruned hedges and bleached smiles of *Stepford Wives*, but rather a murky image of a broken family. This can easily be lost in the pure joy of ET's innocent antics and the box office figures declaring it one of the most successful films of all time. Scooping $792,910,554 worldwide, it's a wonder that there was never an *ET II*. Allegedly, Spielberg and Mathison penned a treatment for a sequel that would see Elliott and his friends attacked by evil aliens and seeking out their friend for help, but a wise decision was made to refrain from a cash-in that could taint this rare being – a Hollywood blockbuster with a heart.

ALIEN OBSESSION

Spielberg has shaped alien entertainment for many moons now. Starting with *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* in 1977, closely followed by *ET: The Extra-Terrestrial* in '82, he has created motherships and Martians that have influenced the way we see these beings. This obsession with UFOs has hovered over his whole career, whether it's been at the helm of less-than remarkable works such as *War Of The World* (2005) or *Indiana Jones And The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull* (2008).

Even when he has vacated the director's chair, the 64-year-old has produced **batteries not included*, the *Men In Black* movies, the *Transformers* franchise, and the upcoming blockbusters *Cowboys & Aliens* and *Super 8*. He's even ventured into television territory with alien abduction and invasion series *Taken* and *Falling Skies*. Clearly, this is where the money lies, but the director himself has admitted in interviews that he does have a genuine fascination with UFOs and the close encounters that members of the public have claimed to have had over the years.

WHY IS ET AN SCI-FI CLASSIC?

1. HEART-WARMING

Those who fail to shed a tear while watching this movie should seriously question whether they are of alien descent themselves. It's a story about friendship and compassion that remains emotive while never erring on the cheesy side.

2. LAUGH OUT LOUD

The sight of ET dressed as an old woman, stumbling around drunk, or hidden under a sheet in the guise of a ghoul is a giggle. He's always up for a laugh, that alien. Even before his controversial CGI makeover, ET was achingly real, and it was these little moments that helped to animate him.

3. PHONE HOME

This instant soundbyte has sparked numerous copycats in adverts, movies and television shows and the image of him riding in the basket of a flying bicycle has become iconic – practically engraved on the retinas of movie fans.

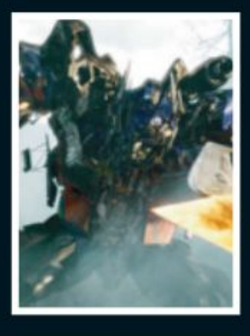
4. THE KIDS AREN'T ANNOYING

Child actors are noted for having a tendency to overplay scenes, especially when an outburst of emotion is called for. The children here, notably Thomas and Barrymore, put in performances well beyond their years, never taking you out of the moment.

5. CAREFULLY CRAFTED

Inspired by his parents' divorce, Spielberg clearly poured all his efforts into making this movie as realistic for the cast and viewers as much as is humanly possible. He later said this was "one of the most perfect films I ever made".

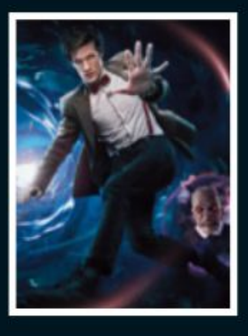
TRANSFORMERS



Transformers are very handy to have on your side, as Sam (Shia LaBeouf) discovers. The Autobots can 'transform' into everyday machinery in order to fight the evil Decepticons, which have the same power. Beware the deadly avalanche of toys that follow in their wake.

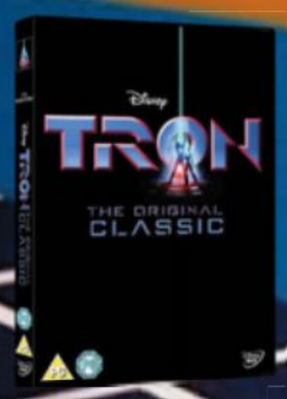
TRANSFORMERS' TAGLINE 'THEIR WAR. OUR WORLD' WAS ORIGINALLY MEANT FOR *AVP: ALIEN VS PREDATOR* (2004).

THE DOCTOR



The time traveller with two hearts skips through space in his TARDIS, audiences are well accustomed to this Saturday night saviour. Whether you'd want him materialising in your garden depends on the incarnation, but the current form appears friendly enough.

DOCTOR WHO IS THE LONGEST RUNNING SCI-FI SERIES EVER MADE FOR TELEVISION, STARTING IN 1963.



TRON
Tron is available on DVD from Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment priced £5.75.

29

TRON'S LIGHT CYCLE

After numerous redesigns across various films, series and video games, Tron's smooth, slick and speedy Light Cycle has now reached its fifth generation

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
DESIGN: ★★★★★
OFFENSIVE POWERS: ★★★★★
SPEED OR RANGE: ★★★★★

■ CONCEIVED BY Syd Mead and later redesigned by Daniel Simon for *Tron: Legacy*, the Light Cycle's seen multiple remodels, but one thing's remained the same; we'd still brave a full-speed, suspense-ridden experience for a chance to ride any of its five generations. Having advanced from the clunky, colourful and canopy-clad first generation, to the latest slick and sexy wheels appearing in the most recent film; we're drawn to that glow like a moth to a flame. With ample toys and models available to own an – albeit miniature and plastic - version for ourselves, *Tron*'s starring cycle is almost as popular as the Batcycle – and certainly, smoother, slicker and not only available in black.

TRON

ON THE CUSP OF A NEW DAWN IN SPECIAL EFFECTS MOVIEMAKING, WRITER/DIRECTOR STEVEN LISBERGER'S TRON BOLDLY WENT WHERE NO MOVIE HAD BEEN BEFORE. FEATURING A CUTTING EDGE COMBINATION OF LIVE ACTION, BACK-LIT ANIMATION AND CGI THAT REACHED ITS PEAK IN THAT THRILLING LIGHT CYCLE RACE, THE VISIONAR DIRECTOR TOOK CINEMAGOERS ON A JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE.

"*Tron* stands alone. There is nothing to compare it to," Jeff Bridges says of the 1982 Disney film in which he starred, and he is not wrong. In fact, hyperbole and superlatives tend to surround *Tron*. Sure, its visual effects, by today's Na'avi-infused 3D standards, are distinctly dated, but at the start of the Eighties they were nothing short of revolutionary. To achieve the distinctive look of *Tron*, the film's writer and director Steven Lisberger used a combination of live action footage, back-lit animation sequences and computer-generated imagery. In an era before the world had gone digital, *Tron* presented cinemagoers with something that they had genuinely never seen before and a story – a battle for freedom set *inside* a computer – which was as futuristic, and no doubt unfathomable to much of the public, as could possibly be. As well as breaking down technological barriers and forging new methods of filmmaking, *Tron* posed something of a contradiction, though.

A Disney-funded special effects action film on the one, and more instantly visible, hand, *Tron* had harder, sci-fi tendencies too. A story about corporate conspiracy, the perils of technology (the film's Master Control Program is as threatening a creation as *2001*'s HAL), and the importance of freedom and the fight to preserve it. Or, as producer Donald Kushner puts it, *Tron* was about "authoritarian government versus democratic government." There was real thematic weight underneath all the neon-tinged body suits and Amstrad-era graphics, and certainly no House of Mouse sing-along songs. Despite these prevalent thematic undercurrents though, *Tron* is famed for its pioneering visuals and effects, and rightly so; they have been mocked, celebrated and paid homage to in popular culture extensively since they first perplexed audiences, and they remain as distinctive now as they were back in 1982. Perhaps, not entirely unsurprisingly, they were not achieved without the spilling of some blood, sweat and tears, though, and there were even fears at the time that the film would not come off at all.

At the start of the Eighties, videogames were the all the craze and Steven Lisberger was no different to any other guy his age. *Space Invaders* and *Pong* had the young animator hooked and from then on he set about doing a movie that incorporated his passion. A script was written but after securing $5 million in independent funding Lisberger hit a wall when several major studios passed on the film, unconvinced that it was possible. Disney, though, took a gamble and coughed up $12 million for Lisberger, a first time director, to put into the practice the CG/live-action/back-lit hybrid he envisaged to tell his tale of the young ENCOM computer programmer, Kevin Flynn. Flynn is betrayed by fellow programmer Dillinger, who steals his game designs and passes them off as his own. In order to find the evidence that proves they were his, Flynn, along with friends Lora and Alan, break into the ENCOM HQ. The Master Control Program – a self-aware program written for the purpose of doing good but which has become rather full of itself – scans Flynn out of existence and dumps him in the virtual world of its mainframe, where he must fight to survive and escape back to the real world. To be expected, bringing this all to life on the silver screen was no small feat.

"In animation you can work on your own pace," Lisberger recalls, "but live-action is a performance piece, it's like capturing lightning in a bottle and it took me a while to adjust." To help him, Lisberger surrounded himself with the best, signing up

TRON-TASTIC!

The best scenes that 1982 CG offered

1. A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Only when audiences sat down in the theatre for the first time could *Tron* show them what movies were really capable of, and it did so with this hyper-kinetic, 'what's going on?', virtual world, light-cycle scene as Clu infiltrates the Master Control Program. Remember Bullet Time, the T-1000, Spielberg's dinos? This was one of those moments.

(T) Clu, Flynn's program counterpart inside the ENCOM system, was named after a programming language of the same name.

2. HONEY, I SHRUNK FLYNN!

After breaking into ENCOM, Flynn tries to hack into the system, with the MCP retaliating by focusing the laser on him that Lora Baines and Walter Gibbs had been developing and then, hey presto, it's "goodbye real world, hello virtual one", as he's zapped to pieces and reconstituted inside the mainframe, light-cycles and all.

(T) The ENCOM laser bay is actually the target bay for the 20-beam Shiva laser facility at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

3. THE RING LEADERS

Rather than squaring off against gladiators in the coliseum, *Tron* pitted Bridges' Flynn against another program in a 'last man standing' bout that was heavily influenced by the prototype arcade *Pong*, as the contestants tossed a ball towards their opponent, the ground disappearing in rings where it bounced.

(T) Lisberger has been greatly influenced by the onset of videogames and had wanted to develop a film incorporating them.

4 LIGHT CYCLE ESCAPE

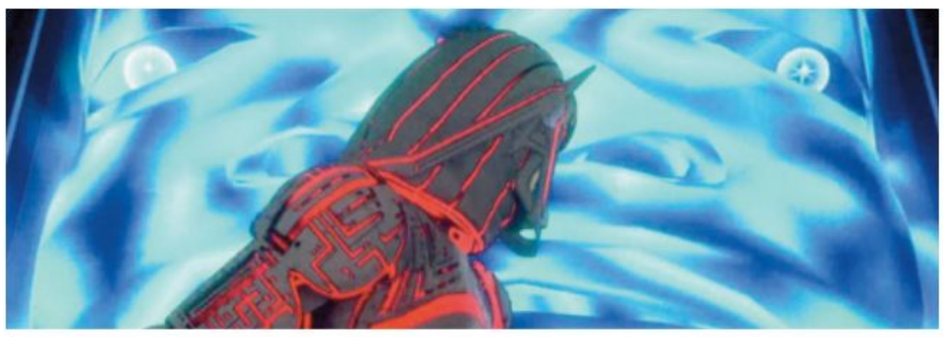
With Ram and Tron in tow, Flynn makes a break for freedom on a light cycle as the MCP's Recognisers move in for the kill. A hyper kinetic sequence that sent jaws-dropping in 1981, it is the scene for which the film is most famed – deservedly so too – and which formed the basis for the teaser trailer/test footage for *Tron Legacy*.

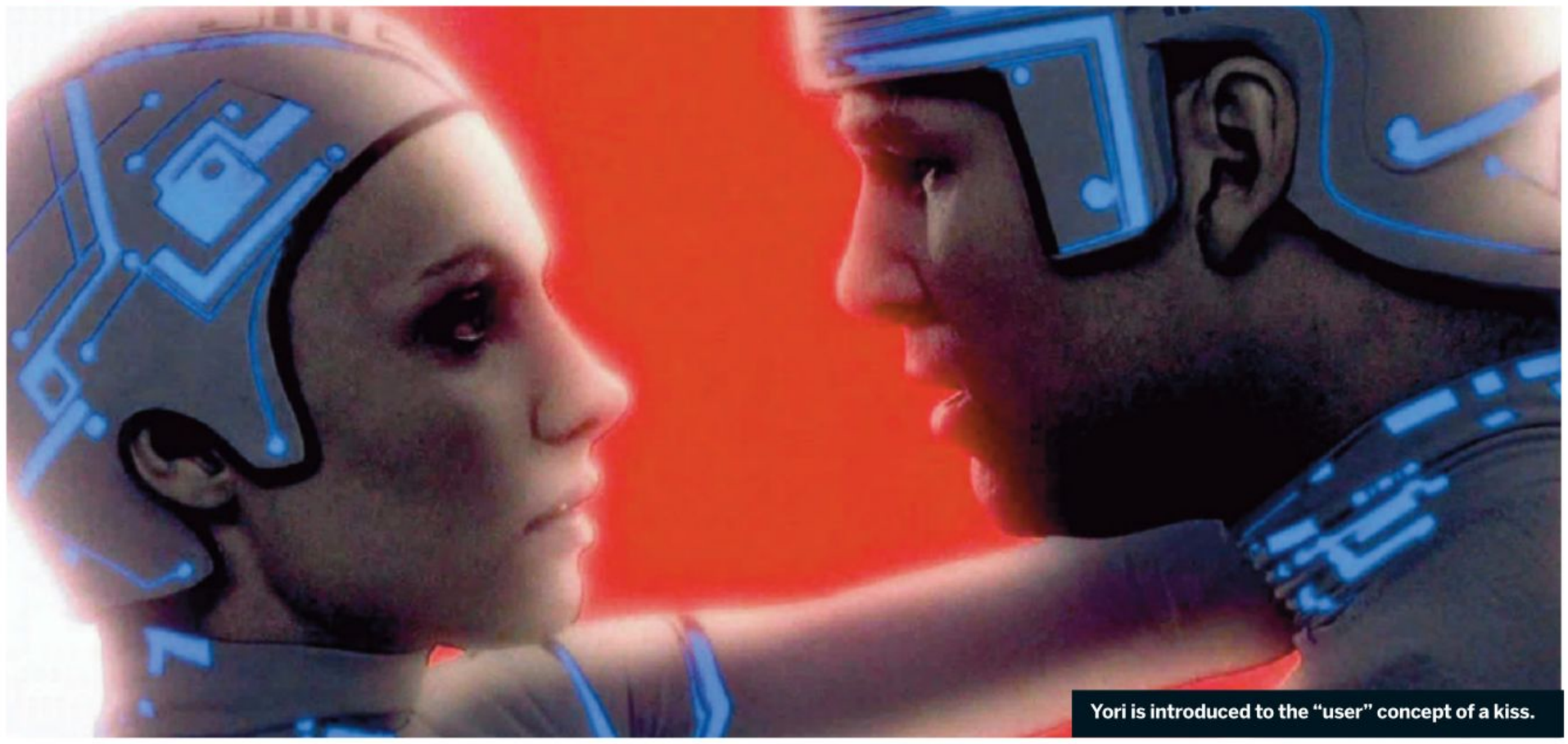
(T) The riders are enclosed in their light cycles because the initial idea – they 'fuse' with their cycles – proved too costly.

5. TIME LAPSE LA

Back in the real world, Lisberger closes the film with a stunning time-lapse shot of Los Angeles from the ENCOM rooftop. As day becomes night, the light from the cars of the City of Angels leave trails similar to those of the light cycles, neatly drawing a comparison between the future that lies in store and the virtual world of *Tron*.

(T) During the filming of the exterior ENCOM scenes, radioactive spillage contaminated actress Cindy Morgan's shoes.





Yori is introduced to the "user" concept of a kiss.

LISBERGER'S LEGACY

Steven Lisberger began his career in animation and he founded his own company Lisberger Studios. The first work the company undertook was producing an hour-long *Animalympics* to be broadcast alongside the coverage of the 1980 Olympics. The first 'Winter' segment was broadcast but the second was shelved after the summer games in Moscow were boycotted.

Lisberger's desire to push forward into new frontiers saw him uproot his Boston-based company for LA, where he focused on bringing his pet project *Tron* to the big screen. After *Tron* he directed two more films – the Mark Hamill-starring sci-fi *Slipstream* and John Cusack comedy *Hot Pursuit* – before leaving the director's chair. He returned as a producer for *Tron Legacy*, neatly passing the torch to a new generation fo filmmakers.

legendary futurist Syd Mead, who would go on to work on Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, and French comic-book artist Jean 'Moebius' Giraud. Mead designed the Light Cycles, Sark's (Dillinger's in-computer program counterpart) carrier, the tanks and the film's logo, and Moebius the costume and sets. "It turned out that the combination of the two [Mead and Moebius] was beautiful," Lisberger says of the pair's involvement. "Syd is so futuristic and so stylish and Moebius's artwork is so spiritual and charming, between the two it felt right."

Just as important to the film's success though was the casting of the actors. As Flynn, Lisberger hired Bridges, a young actor whose enthusiasm for the project was refreshingly evident from the off. "It was risky, and chancy," Bridges recalls of his motivations for taking on the film, "but it was a chance to do something new, so I got on board." To play Tron, Alan's corresponding 'program', Lisberger hired Bruce Boxleitner, an actor known for his work in westerns, and who "had a hard time envisaging himself as a videogame hero in a Disney movie," according to his

"WE'D GO AWAY, SHUT THE DOOR AND JUST GO 'THERE'S SO MUCH THAT HAS TO BE PULLED TOGETHER!'"

director. Barnard Hughes joined as Dr Walter Gibb, Cindy Morgan as Lora, and David Warner, of *The Omen* fame, signed up to play Dillinger. Yet the actor who met such a famous end in Richard Donner's demonic blockbuster was not, in fact, the original choice for the role, as producer Kushner explains: "Peter O'Toole was going to play the part and he'd read the script... and he came out to the studio and was disappointed to discover it was all going to be put in in post-production." Unable to comprehend what Lisberger was attempting, he dropped out.

The shoot itself was no walk in the park. Actors talking about the trouble of working with CG-greenscreen is now commonplace, tennis balls on the end of sticks substituting for Jurassic monsters, or alien beasts in a galaxy far, far away, but for the cast of *Tron* it was a new type of screen acting altogether, a practice much more akin to the limited sets and imagination-driven environment of the stage. "You never knew if you were over-acting or under-acting," Bridges remembers of the shoot, which he found demanding.

The sets and costumes did little to help them visualise the world they would end up immersed in. Shot entirely in black and white (the neon colours were added in post-production), the actors would spend all day in a monochrome environment before emerging at the end of a day's work into the Technicolor Californian sun. "We were encouraged to wear bright, colourful clothes," Bridges says of his non-costume workday attire. "At the end of the day we'd go outside and be bombarded by colour!"

TRON TITTERS

Moments from the original Tron which have not aged as well as the Light Cycle race...

"INOPERATIVE DATA PUSHERS"

"This town's full of live ones," Flynn notes and he's not far wrong. Coming across like ENCOM's lo-fi virtual Mos Eisley, Flynn walks past the inoperative data pushers, a collection of strange and odd programs, the trouble being that rather than a cast of legions, the production could only afford to have a few characters milling about.

T Although *Tron* was an initial failure, the videogame based on it out-grossed the film.

DUMONT BOBBLE-HEAD

Bobble heads of your favourite sci-fi characters are one thing; life-size bobble head characters *in* your fave films are quite another, and that's certainly how Dumont comes across in *Tron*, with Dr Walter Gibb's program counterpart unveiled with a disconcerting wobbling head costume.

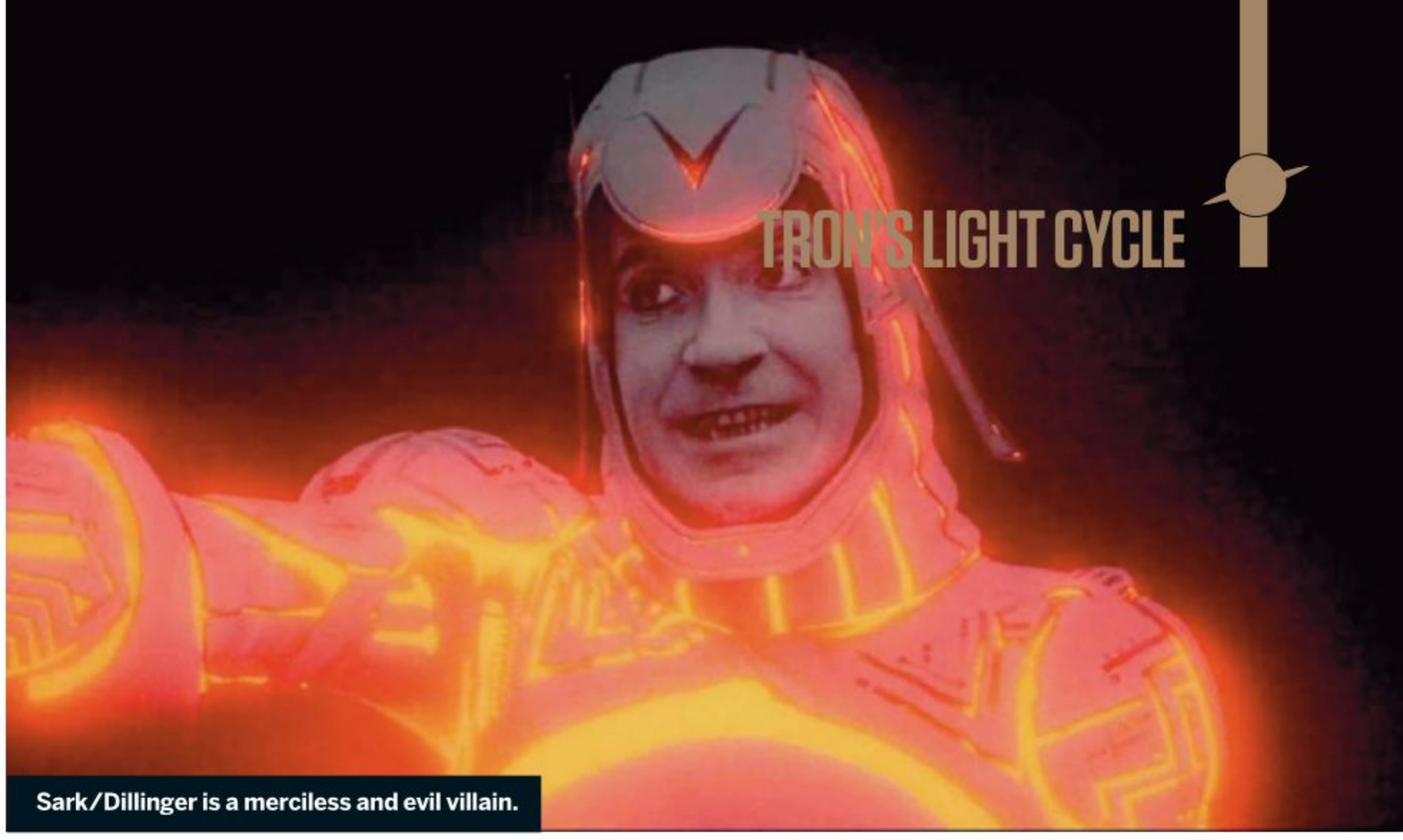
T Many Disney animators refused to work on the film, as they feared that the CG techniques would put them out of a job.

SOLAR SAILOR SCRAP

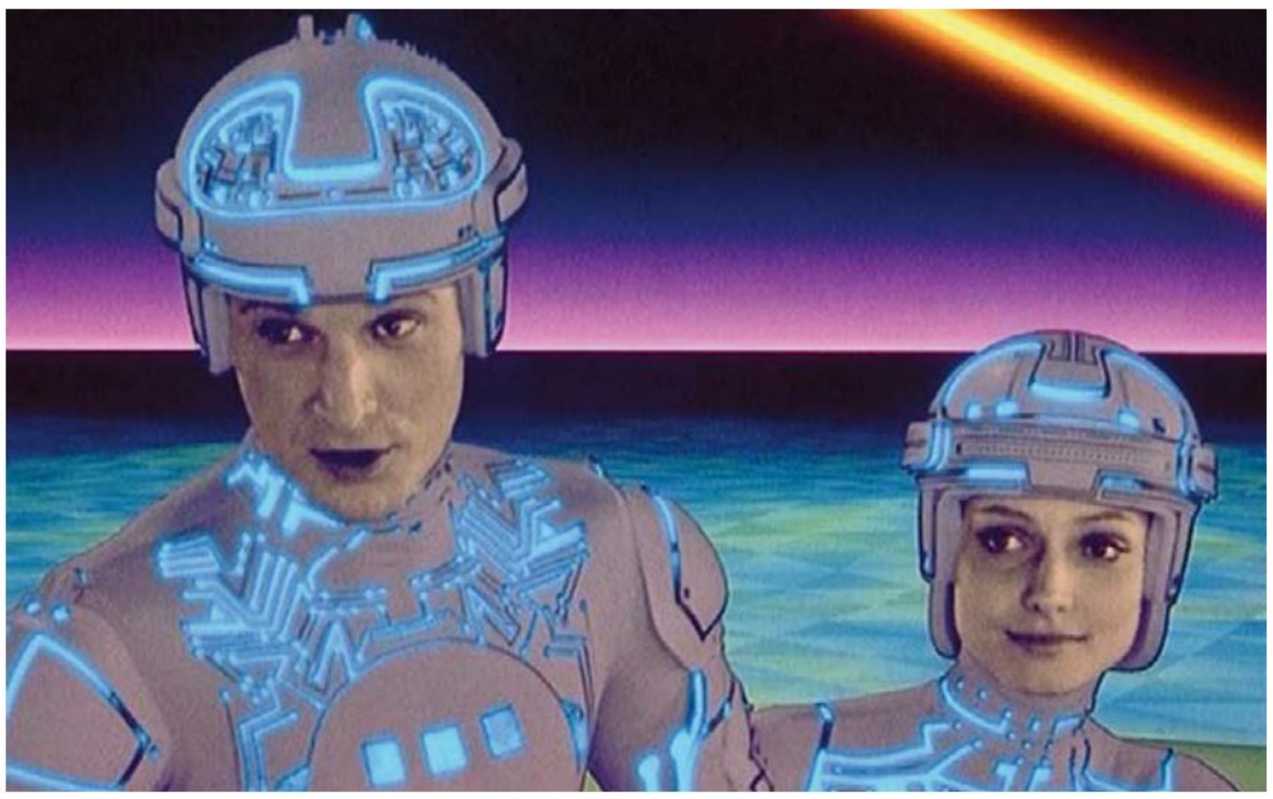
With Tron and Yori on the Sailor, the MCP sends some goons after them only for Tron to dispatch them with amusing ease. One-by-one he takes them on and sends them packing, as they tumble and fall from the Solar Sailor, with little threat posed, to their demise below.

T British rock group Supertramp were to contribute to the soundtrack, but previous commitments prevented them from doing so.

The CG effects really were groundbreaking at the time.



Sark/Dillinger is a merciless and evil villain.



Once the filming was done, the arduous process of post-production began, with no fewer than 500 different people involved throughout the life of the project. "There were times when the studio asked us 'Is it all going to come together?' and we'd say, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah,' but then we'd go away, shut the door and just go 'there's *so* much that has to be pulled together!'" Lisberger remembers.

Actor Dan Shor (program Ram) only became aware of the painstaking process of combining the elements after he was accosted on an LA street by a crew member who told him he hated his nose. Why? Because he had spent the year colouring it in frame-by-frame. With each shot in the film a composite of different processes, there can be anything from five to 25 different layers on the screen at any one time, the number of personnel swelling to bring down the initial estimate of a month of post-production time per minute of completed film. The Light Cycle sequences alone posed a gigantic – and patience-testing – task with 600 coordinates required to plot the cycles' movements throughout just four seconds of the movie. And these co-ordinates had to be entered, one-by-one, by hand.

The work paid off, though, and *Tron* emerged in 1982 to confound audiences; with the public accustomed to 2D games, *Tron*'s 3D depictions beggared belief, and then placing real actors in these was incomprehensible. *Tron* marked a seismic shift in the way effects movies were made. However, although it recouped its budget, the film wasn't universally embraced, and it was refused Oscar Nominations for its effects work on the grounds that using computers was 'cheating'. "If there was any miscalculation," Disney chairman Dick Cook reminisces of the film, "it was where the world was at the time. If *Tron* had come out in 1990 it would have been one of the biggest movies of all time." With *Tron 3* following on the heels of Joseph Kosinski's visually breathtaking *Tron: Legacy,* the franchise Light Cycle is revving its engines for another shot at Dick Cook's promised glory.

Why is Tron a sci-fi classic?

1. Light cycles
Light cycles, have we mentioned them at all yet? The film's definitive light cycles, in the science-fiction encyclopaedia of greatest machines ever invented, are up there with X-Wings, hoverboards and Off-World Spinners.

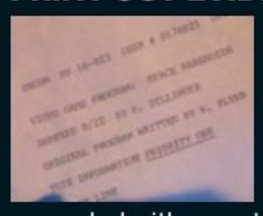
2. The future starts here
It paved the way for future filmmakers and effects artists to attempt the impossible, and, with its visionary CG techniques, heralded a new dawn in the way effects were achieved.

3. The Legacy
Because, almost 30 years laterit got a sequl (surely the longest gap between original and sequel in Hollywood history), but rather than ditching the original's design and revamping the visuals, *Tron Legacy* opted to keep the same layered, mainframe reaching to the horizon design. And it kept those all-important Light Cycles too.

4. The Dude!
With the cavalier effects and CG-grandstanding, *Tron* needed an enigmatic performance to anchor the story, to provide its beating heart and take the viewer on the emotional journey, and it has this in Jeff Bridges.

5. The underdog triumphs
Disney usually had the cutesy films but with *Tron* the tables were turned, as it was Disney that had the cutting edge film (which was pitted against the opposition's cutesy *ET*). This was down to its creator Lisberger. *Tron*, and Light Cycles were his idea and it was his energy and creative drive that saw them come to fruition.

PRINT OUT EVIDENCE



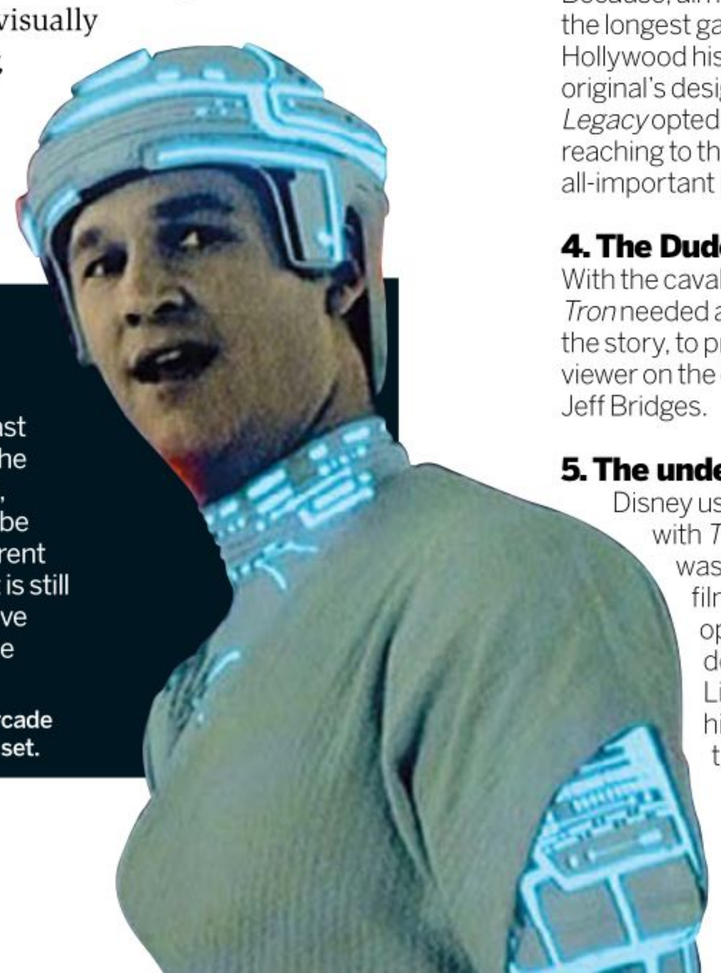
After infiltrating ENCOM and finding the proof that it was he and not competing programmer Dillinger that designed the videogames, he is rewarded with a neat – too neat – little print out which basically says exactly that: "Flynn – good, Dillinger – bad." As far as evidence goes, it's about as handy as they come.

The print out was originally a much longer document, but it was simplified so the audience would understand its implications.

EIGHTIES COOL

No mention of the Eighties would be complete with at least some reference to the fashions of the time, in this case it has to be Flynn's red-sleeved jacket. Despite the current resurgence in Eighties fashions, this jacket is still a shocker and manages the quite impressive feat of looking more dated than some of the movie's nascent CG techniques.

Jeff Bridges could often be found on the arcade machines Lisberger had littered round the set.



30

FLASH GORDON

The top polo player/quarter back leaves a meteor-strewn Earth in search of the fireballs' source, becoming 'saviour of the universe' after defeating Ming the Merciless

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ HEAR THAT? That's the sound of Queen's theme song on repeat in your head. With the entire score composed and performed by the aforementioned band, it should've been an immediate hit. But, shadowed by the likes of *Star Wars* and *Superman*, it wasn't until its cult following grew that Flash's fan base did the same. Created by Alex Raymond, the hero – and Yale Graduate – was inspired by, and designed to compete with, the Buck Rogers comic strip. The now globally recognised star – and his escapades through Mongo, Earth and across the universe – has motion pictures, an animated series, radio series' and novels tucked into his too tight trousers.

FLASH! AAAAHHH!

A PERFECT PIECE OF HIGH CAMP KITSCH, 1980'S FLASH GORDON MADE A CULT ICON OF ITS STAR, ITS SCORE AND ITS BELLOWING BIRDMAN. WE CAUGHT UP WITH SAM J JONES TO THANK HIM FOR SAVING EVERY ONE OF US...

"Gordon's alive!?" You no doubt honked in genuine surprise when Sam J Jones popped up in Seth McFarlane's 2012 comedy *Ted*. The *Flash Gordon* star is very much alive, and very much a part of the pop culture pantheon. We caught up with him at the Gold Coast Supanova film festival to recall the film that earned him a Golden Raspberry nomination.

What is the appeal of *Flash Gordon* and why do you feel it has endured?
I think it's so versatile; it has so many different looks. We had two different directors: one was [*Don't Look Now* director] Nicolas Roeg and the vision he gave from a year of pre-production and then Mike Hodges and [producer] Dino De Laurentiis' vision, and just a great cast. It was camp, it was funny, it was serious, and it was action adventure. Good fighting evil – a great mix!

How did you get the part?
I'd just done this movie *10* with Dudley Moore, and Dino flew me to London for this old-fashioned screen test, where they changed my hair. The thing about Dino was that he really wanted the character to look authentic. If you take a picture of [original Thirties Flash] Buster Crabbe at the age of 25 and then me at 25, it's really frightening – we both look identical.

Do you keep in touch with Brian Blessed after you finished on the film?
Melody [Anderson, who played love interest Dale Arden], Brian and myself were on a panel in London a couple of years ago, and Brian is such a character! He just takes full control and he's such a showman – a wild man! He told me that he had over 1,500 animals, and I said "So you have 500 sheep?" And he said "No Sam, I have over 1,400 different animals!' I love the guy; he's got such a commanding presence.

You were relatively young and inexperienced on *Flash Gordon*. How did you handle working with actors of such stature?
I looked at the cast of seasoned actors and thought, "Well, I can't really compete with that – let's just bring to the table what I am and who I am, and I can't really do anything else" – that's it! Max von Sydow, Blessed and John Hallam [who played flying hawkman Luro] and the guys were very encouraging, and there wasn't a whole lot of time to think "Oh my God, what am I doing?' so I had to just have confidence. Because the schedule was so tight it didn't allow for negativity – by the time you had done one scene you were out rehearsing for another.

> **"TED WILL MOVE IN WITH FLASH GORDON AND HE GUIDES HIM THROUGH LIFE'S ISSUES"**
> SAM J JONES

And you improvised a bit too, didn't you?
I did, and I loved to ad-lib, and thank God I had that freedom to do that, especially with all the blue screen – you just had to improvise. They had me elevated on the rocket cycle, and obviously nobody was next to me and they would say "This is the scene with the flying hawkmen so do it! Roll camera!" So really you were just imagining it, but sometimes the improvisation got me into trouble when they wanted it a certain way, and I liked to just make things up as I went along.

Which scene are you particularly proud of?
I think the rotating disc fight scene with Timothy Dalton. We were rotating and elevated about 30 feet in the air. We prepped and practiced for about three weeks in rehearsal. Dalton was a bit serious at the beginning, so I told him "Look, I'm just here to have fun, and if you accidentally hit me with that whip and scar me I'm gonna tackle you a bit harder!" The disc as you saw it has these rubber tips but a metal shaft. Every now and again Timothy would accidentally hit me with the ball whip, so I made sure I'd tackle him with the metal spike, but it worked out well.

Did you keep any of the props?
Well, that rocket cycle in *Ted* was an exact replica of the original one in *Flash Gordon*, and they gave it to me. It's huge! I thought I would be able to bring it home and fit it in my garage, but it's 12 foot long and 9 foot wide. I also have the original Flash T-shirt – I think there were 12 made in total.

Talking about *Ted*, did you mind the portrayal of yourself as a party animal?
The script said inexplicably that Sam Jones arrives at this party with the same hairdo he's had for 33 years [laughs]! Yeah, we watered it down. Seth MacFarlane called and said that when he was nine years old he saw *Flash Gordon*, and that I'd inspired him and now he's doing his first live-action movie.

There's talk of a sequel too...
Yeah, we're talking early next year, so I'm excited about that. I'm thinking about may be a different story: maybe Ted will move in with Flash and he guides him through life's issues, but maybe Ted might influence Flash the wrong way, so there might be a good little conflict there!

Flash Gordon is out now on Blu-ray, priced at £7.20.

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MAL REYNOLDS

The pro-humanity, anti-government captain – and protagonist of series, Firefly, and movie, Serenity - was propelled into sci-fi hero territory thanks to Nathan Fillion

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ ONE OF JOSS Whedon's most celebrated creations, Mal is iconic, mostly because he's relatable. Wary, yet trusting, he has a strong dislike towards governments, which he believes are 'made for getting in a man's way.' The originally much darker character was toned down after Fox affectively told Whedon to give him a chill-pill. Seemingly, the results were positive, as Reynolds has since been recognised among countless sci-fi legend and icon lists, and Fillion's snapped up numerous awards for his portrayal. The two now often come hand-in-hand; the *Halo 3* character – voiced by Fillion – Gunnery Sergant Reynolds, shares Mal's name. The show may have ended prematurely, but Reynolds' legacy lives on.

THE ADVENTURES OF MAL REYNOLDS

CREATOR AND SHOWRUNNER JOSS WHEDON TAKES US THROUGH EVERY EPISODE OF THE CULT SCI-FI SERIES THAT OVER ITS PAINFULLY SHORT RUN BECAME A CAST-IRON GENRE BENCHMARK AND MADE AN ICON OF ITS STAR

© Lan Bui

At 2012's San Diego Comic-Con, upwards of 20,000 fans lined up for a tenth anniversary panel devoted to Joss Whedon's *Firefly*, which could seat, at most, about a quarter of that crowd.

Airing from 2002 to 2003, blighted by editorial interference from the off and aired out of sequence by Fox, it's easy to see conspiracy and injustice at the heart of *Firefly*'s cancellation, but ten years on and the show's following has only grown – a testament to the character-driven storytelling, evocative setting and dream team of writers, cast and crew. We sat down with Joss Whedon to get his thoughts on the show that did for science fiction what *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* did for the supernatural…

EPISODE ONE: 'SERENITY'

FIRST BROADCAST: 20 December 2002
TRIVIA: *Buffy* and *Angel* guest star Carlos Jacott plays Alliance agent Lawrence Dobson.
SYNOPSIS: The crew of Serenity is eager to rid themselves of an easily traceable piece of cargo they salvaged from a vessel adrift in space, totally unaware that a passenger has brought an even more dangerous cargo aboard.
JOSS WHEDON: "The infamous pilot. For me, the strength of the thing was in its pilotiness, which is different in being a two-hour pilot than any movie. You're sort of introducing people to a world, asking a lot of questions that you're not going to answer and setting everything up. I love the way it did that. It captured exactly what I was looking for, and was the first time that I got to realise that all of my actors were extraordinary and embodied the people they were playing to a frightening extent. Everything was so easy, which should have been my first warning.

"My whole mission statement was a sort of Seventies Western kind of feel to it, which is very much a lot of TV shows nowadays with a lot of handheld and sloppiness. That was done to get away from the science fiction kind of pomp, the stately, sterile morality tales that I just thought were a little dull. I wanted to do something that felt very contemporary, and the way we were able to experiment – some of the prettiest frames I've ever had the opportunity to make are in that show. And, of course, when we were working on the set we were working over the tank they had dug for *Alien: Resurrection*, so I felt like there was an exorcism of sorts going on.

EPISODE TWO: 'THE TRAIN JOB'

FIRST BROADCAST: 20 September 2002
TRIVIA: What looks like a modern US space shuttle is docked at Niska's space station.
SYNOPSIS: Mal discovers that two boxes of goods his crew has been hired to steal are full of medical supplies headed for the mining town of Paradiso.
WHEDON: "The network said, 'We don't like the pilot, write another one.' It was Friday around 5pm, and they said, 'You know how we wanted you to pitch us a story to give us an idea of what the show would be like? Actually, we want you to write a new pilot that's one hour long and it has to be on our desks before we get into work on Monday.' So [executive producer] Tim Minear and I looked at each other and said, 'OK.'

"So in two days we wrote 'The Train Job,' which had the difficult and ultimately self-defeating task of trying to introduce nine people who have already met to an audience without making it sound really, really hokey. As a result, a lot got lost on people and the resonance of the relationships disappeared. It just didn't have the time necessary to make you care about all of these people. You just sort of saw them go by in a flash and hoped you picked up who they were and what they did. But I still think the episode was extremely fun and funny, and has a really cool floating train in it."

EPISODE THREE: 'BUSHWACKED'

FIRST BROADCAST: 27 September 2002
TRIVIA: The derelict spaceship set was recycled from an episode of *Power Rangers*.
SYNOPSIS: After encountering a booby-trapped spacecraft carrying the lone crew member of a horrific Reaver attack, Serenity is boarded by an Alliance Commander looking for Simon (Sean Maher) and River (Summer Glau).

The show's cast reunite for the tenth anniversary.

WHEDON: "First of all, the episode scared the shit out of me. The thing I remember about that is that I have always been extremely strict with my actors about dialogue. To the very comma. I will go nuts on them. But when we got to the basketball scene in this episode, we had a bunch of scripted stuff. I was saying to Tim, 'You are going to turn the cameras on them and let them play for a while, right?' Tim is, like, 'Yeah, totally.' And we ended up throwing out all of the scripted stuff and only using the improv stuff while they were playing. All of that was just them having a great time, which they really were. We let Alan go on and on in the interrogation scene, and we used some of that stuff. That kind of looseness and trust and freedom is a new thing for me. I'm a very controlling filmmaker. That's just an example of the way we liked to make the show and how much that set was a creative place."

EPISODE FOUR: 'SHINDIG'

FIRST BROADCAST: 1 November 2002
TRIVIA: A ship from the influential *Star Wars* comic *Dark Empire* can be seen in the background.
SYNOPSIS: In order to secure a job transporting cargo off-planet for a client, Mal (Nathan Fillion) attends a social event where a dance with Inara (Morena Baccarin) leads to him being challenged to a swordfight in defence of her honour.
WHEDON: "'Shindig' was supposed to come along a little bit later than it did, because we sort of looked at it and thought, 'All of a sudden we're into hoop skirts, people might still be wondering about horses. Have we gone too far?' Any chance to feature Mal and Inara going at each other is very important to me. Those guys are just delightful together. The thing that blew me away the most in this was Jewel [Staite] in her big old dress, which was just about the cutest thing I'd seen in a long time. The way she plays it, she is just so adorable. It's happened with all of them, but it was a moment for me when I said, 'Oh, OK, she's a star, too.' And, hey, floating chandelier – what more could you ask for?"

> "ALL OF A SUDDEN WE'RE INTO HOOP SKIRTS, PEOPLE MIGHT STILL BE WONDERING ABOUT HORSES. HAVE WE GONE TOO FAR?" JOSS WHEDON

EPISODE FIVE: 'SAFE'

FIRST BROADCAST: 8 November 2002
TRIVIA: *High School Musical* heartstealer Zac Efron makes his acting debut as the young Simon Tam.
SYNOPSIS: When Simon is kidnapped by a group of villagers in need of a doctor, Serenity is forced to make contact with an Alliance ship in order to seek medical help for the critically-wounded Book (Ron Glass).
WHEDON: "This was an example of things not going the way that we wanted originally. We had a completely different bunch of flashbacks with a completely different bunch of actors. The message of the thing was very important to me, which was the idea of Simon realising that he had found a home; that a real parent isn't somebody who's extremely great, but only when it's convenient. It's somebody, no matter how rough they might be, that will never let you down. That's sort of what Mal becomes in that episode, and that meant a lot to me."

EPISODE SIX: 'OUR MRS REYNOLDS'

FIRST BROADCAST: 4 October 2002
TRIVIA: This is the only episode in the entire series where River Tam has no lines.
SYNOPSIS: After a celebration in which the crew is honoured for ridding a planet of bandits, they return to Serenity to find a woman named Saffron (Christina Hendricks) who claims Mal is her husband.

Much of the show's plot centered around the damaged, enigmatic River Tam.

WHEDON: "This was a really interesting one for me. I never had a writing experience like that before. I literally wrote stuff down, looked at it and said, 'Where did that come from?' I just couldn't stop writing. When Mal starts talking to Saffron about his life, I didn't know any of that stuff; I hadn't planned out any of that stuff and didn't know where I was going with it. I read it and I said, 'Where did that come from and why is he talking so much? Oh, because she's one of those people who make people talk so much.' And then Wash does the same thing and you realise she's one of those people that gets you to open up and kind of sets you against everybody else. The amount of fun I had writing that just could not be greater."

EPISODE SEVEN: 'JAYNESTOWN'

FIRST BROADCAST: 18 October 2002

TRIVIA: Adam Baldwin stole the head of his statue during filming, causing continuity problems.

SYNOPSIS: When the crew returns to a planet where Jayne (Adam Baldwin) participated in a heist gone bad, they're shocked to discover that Jayne's past actions have turned him into a local hero of Robin Hood-like mythic proportions.

WHEDON: "This was one of the first times we began to realise what a force we had with Ben Edlund, who pitched the idea. Very few ideas are actually pitched to me. I tend to come up with them myself or in concert with Tim or Marti Noxon or David Greenwalt. Or I tend to come in with at least some idea of, 'You know, I think we need to feel scared. I want the insecurity of…' It's usually a process of developing the idea from something I've pitched out. On *Firefly* we were hearing pitches and would have had more opportunities to do stuff that came directly from the writers. But Ben is one of those guys who comes up with ideas where you just go, 'Uh, yes. OK, I'll just be here, go ahead.'"

EPISODE EIGHT: 'OUT OF GAS'

FIRST BROADCAST: 25 October 2002

TRIVIA: Zoe spends most of the episode unconscious, so actress Gina Torres could go on her honeymoon.

SYNOPSIS: After an explosion leave Serenity crippled, Mal orders everyone to abandon ship while he stays behind in an attempt to make repairs – and reminisces about how he found the ship and picked its crew.

WHEDON: "My single favourite episode. I broke the story very specifically with Tim. I pitched all of the flashbacks, very specifically the structure and I'm blowing my horn about what I had to do with that episode, because I did not write it and I did not direct, and it really is our best. Apart from the flashbacks, just the very ending, just seeing Serenity from across a crowded room and falling in love, it explains so much about our characters, who they were and what they wanted. It was such a simple premise: this ship is going to break, we're all going to die because of something really, really mundane. I just think there was more emotion, surprising humour and a perfect kind of structure to that thing than anything else we did."

The somewhat anti-climatic feel of the final episode was made up for in the form of movie *Serenity*.

Morena Baccarin went on to star in the acclaimed *Homeland*.

EPISODE NINE: 'ARIEL'

FIRST BROADCAST: 15 November 2002

TRIVIA: The vehicle used to smuggle everyone into the hospital is a modified version of a Russian Mi-24 Hind attack helicopter.

SYNOPSIS: Simon offers the crew a proposition: if they help him sneak River into a hospital so that he can run some tests on her, he will tell them where to find medical supplies that will fetch an enormous price on the black market.

WHEDON: "Another show that blew me away, and a lot of the credit goes to Allan Kroeker, who shot it. He really used our hand-held aesthetic in a dynamic way. There was just a lot of gorgeous footage and a lot of energy. I remember pulling into the Fox lot behind Tim and going, 'I know what the next one is…' When you have the sword over your head the entire production, and think you might be cancelled at any moment, the one great thing is you're not allowed to go, 'Here's an interesting idea we can doodle with.' You have to go straight to the primal place. What is the most painful, important, riveting and telling – what will keep them in the seats, what will get them to come back? You have to go to the primal place every time out.

To me, after 'Out Of Gas,' what I needed to see was Simon and River and their world and what they had, what they lost and really see Simon sort of taking charge, which he pretty much did. I also wanted to see Jayne betray them, because you can be irascible so long before you're just lovable."

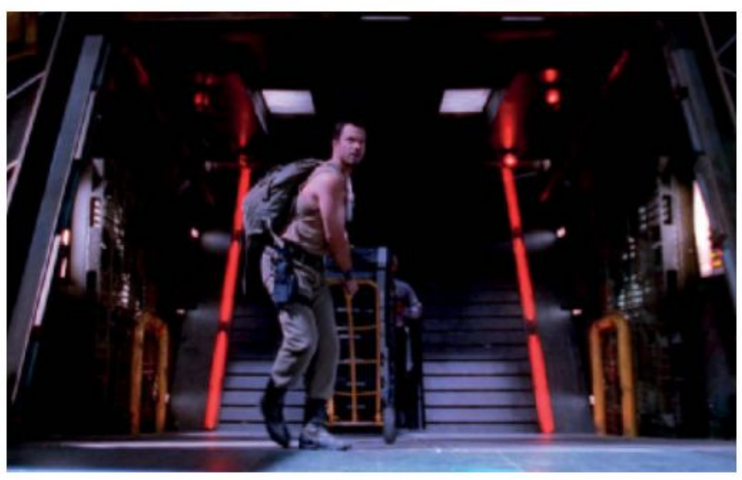
EPISODE 10: 'WAR STORIES'

FIRST BROADCAST: 6 December 2002

TRIVIA: Three ships from *Star Trek: Voyager* can be seen in the background.

SYNOPSIS: Wash (Alan Tudyk) regrets insisting he be allowed to accompany Mal on a mission after the two men are captured by Adelai Niskan (Michael Fairman) – the client who previously hired Mal to steal the medicine bound for Paradiso.

WHEDON: "There was that run of the last bunch where it felt like we were firing on all cylinders. I loved the Zoe/Wash relationship. You know, that was the sticking point at the very end of picking-up process. The studio said, 'They can't be married,' and that's when I said, 'I don't want you to pick up the show.' They said, 'We're thinking of picking up the show because we read 'The Train Job' and we see the potential, but we don't want the characters married, it interferes with romantic entanglements.' It was just a nightmare experience. I said, 'I'm not making Melrose Space. I want to see a marriage. I've got a preacher on board, I've got a young girl who's a schizophrenic – I've got aspects of life. That's there for a reason and marriage is one of them.' What was great in 'War Stories' was being able to play the conflict of the marriage without making it whiney and insufferable. They're both incredibly charming and funny during that, and then to play



Even with a large ensemble cast, no character was left wanting for screen time.

"JUXTAPOSITION IS PRETTY MUCH THE BENCHMARK OF MY CAREER AND IT DOESN'T GET ANY BIGGER THAN THAT" JOSS WHEDON

that out during a torture scene… really examine the issues as a way of trying to deal with being tortured… well, juxtaposition is pretty much the benchmark of my career, and it doesn't get any bigger than that."

EPISODE 11: 'TRASH'

FIRST BROADCAST: 28 June 2003

TRIVIA: Whedon tips the hat to *Toy Story* director John Lasseter with the Lasseter laser pistol

SYNOPSIS: Mal is shocked to discover his old friend's new bride is Saffron who, although furious after Mal blows her cover, offers to cut Mal in on what she calls the perfect big-time scam.

WHEDON: "Who among us didn't want to see more of Saffron? She was delightful. Between her and Mal's butt, we knew that this was landmark television. It was another sort of heist episode, and was fun with a lot of things to play. It really was probably the lightest episode we did. The scene between Mal and Inara at the beginning is just hilarious, really an opportunity to play around with everybody more than anything else. Obviously, we always like to hit a few issues, and I was interested in Saffron's psychosis and I liked breaking it down like that and seeing what was behind it. It doesn't mean you catch her, it doesn't mean you win, but her interplay with Mal speaks a lot about both of them. It just came out fun."

EPISODE 12: 'THE MESSAGE'

FIRST BROADCAST: 15 July 2003

TRIVIA: A 12-inch tall Han Solo-in-carbonite figure can be seen to the left of Kaylee's hammock.

SYNOPSIS: While Jayne opens a mail package from his mother that contains a wool cap with ear flaps and a pom-pom, Mal and Zoe open their package to discover the body of their old war buddy, Tracey.

WHEDON: "The episode we were shooting when I got to tell everybody that we were cancelled. I love that episode because it dealt with war, Mal's morality and a dead body, which is always fun. It bears an enormous sadness considering it's all about death and betrayal and honour and sadness – it all worked out fine considering things. It bore that because everybody knew that it was over. Except me, who still refuses to admit it. It's part of my charm, really."

EPISODE 13: 'HEART OF GOLD'

FIRST BROADCAST: 19 August 2003

TRIVIA: As with Chinese culture, the dominant colour at the funeral is white.

SYNOPSIS: The crew comes to the aid of a bordello when its madam, an old acquaintance of Inara's, asks for help after a gunslinger claims a prostitute's baby is his and he's taking it because his wife is infertile.

WHEDON: "Another one that we did a lot of reshooting and tinkering with after the fact. I think it came together really well, but when we looked at the first cut it left something to be desired. It was just one of those things with a lot of missteps. Also, we had been getting notes from the network and we had done this early enough in the process where we looked at it and were like, "Nobody but us seems to have gotten the message to tone down the Western thing,' so everything looked so Western that we were, like, 'The network is going to kill us. This is like we're spitting in their face.' So we did a few reshoots and changed a couple of lines to sort of hit the idea of why it was the way it was.

"Basically, shows do go through development stages. What happened with me is I came in and said, 'Here's exactly what I want to do,' and they were, like, 'We want a show from you, so do that.' It wasn't like, 'Does it have to be a Western?' It was a little too late for that. They let me make the pilot and then they were, like, 'Oh. Right. A Western with the horsies and sidearms?' They just didn't think that people would respond to it, although when they saw the credits and saw the shot of the spaceship scattering those horses, that they liked. It was a stretch."

EPISODE 14: 'OBJECTS IN SPACE'

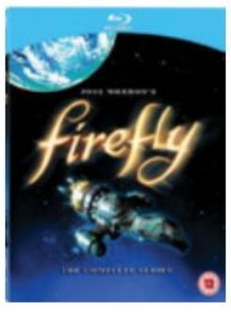
FIRST BROADCAST: 13 December 2002

TRIVIA: Bounty Hunter Jubal Early (Richard Brooks) was directly inspired by Boba Fett.

SYNOPSIS: The crew is caught off-guard when a bounty hunter, eager to claim the enormous reward on River's head, sneaks aboard Serenity and methodically begins taking the crew prisoner one by one.

WHEDON: "About as big a labour of love that I've ever done, and definitely one of the two or three episodes that I'm proudest of that I've made of any show. It's an odd little episode in some ways. It was very much an existential statement on the meaning of objects in space and how they contain meanings within themselves; how we approach that and about two people that see them in a way that everyday people don't, and what the essential difference is, which is that one of them, the bounty hunter, is innately bringing evil with him and one of them, River, is innately bringing love.

"The show was over, but eventually we had the film *Serenity*. Coming up with an idea and seeing it through to a screenplay was the hardest thing I've ever tried to do, because *Firefly* was designed as a show. The movie needed to be true to that while being completely separated from that. You don't make a movie just because you have a bunch of charismatic people. You need a story that is bigger than life in this situation. What's great is that the show was always about the fact that these guys are actual size, not bigger than life. To take them and put them in a situation that is so dire as the one in the movie is kind of where the fun and tension is. The fate of the world is in the hands of schlemiels, and that's always exciting."



Firefly – The Complete Series is available now on Blu-ray, priced at £13.25.

32

NEO

Having opted to discover what the Matrix is, Neo becomes a badass fighter, causing some of the most iconic fight sequences in sci-fi history

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
DESIGN: ★★★★★
FIGHTING SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ THE MATRIX is arguably one of the most iconic sci-fi series of the last 20 years. When something can create as many references and impact as *The Matrix*, you know you're on to a winner. Trinity's coat became a fashion must-have. The Wachoskis haven't created anything quite like it again since.

But it's Neo – born Thomas A Anderson – that has become the most stand-out icon from the franchise. Offered the choice between forgetting the Matrix and learning what it is, he opts for the latter. Guided by Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne), Neo becomes a master of lots of martial arts, resulting in loads of gravity defying stunts.

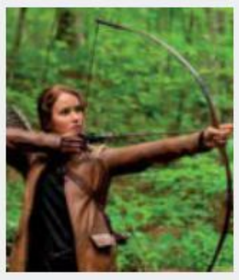
NEO

KATNISS EVERDEEN

33

KATNISS EVERDEEN

The Girl on Fire has quickly become the Districts' – and our – new favourite heroine, after championing the Hunger Games and provoking a rebellion against The Capitol



SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ CONCEIVED BY Suzanne Collins and brought to life by Jennifer Lawrence, Katniss was propelled to sci-fi icon status the moment she volunteered as tribute for her sister, Prim. Lawrence shot Katniss to stardom – and, arguably, vice verse – but it's Collins' character, and her bowstring, that grasped at our heartstrings, encouraging all to back the Mockingjay to the bitter end. After a stretched out era dominated by a certain Bella Swan, Miss Everdeen couldn't have emerged at a better time. Finally, a Ripley-like protagonist had returned, giving us a reason to root for the lady lead once more. We haven't wanted to master archery this badly since watching Legolas notch-up an impressive orc death toll.

34

ARROW & THE FLASH

Crossover episodes have always been a massive draw to TV shows, but nobody does it quite like The Flash and Arrow. You could say it was super. Sorry

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
DESIGN: ★★★★★
OFFENSIVE POWERS: ★★★★★
SPEED OR RANGE: ★★★★★

■ BARRY ALLEN is the fastest man alive. So when he came running into *Arrow*, it was hardly going to be a simple affair. The night before, Oliver Queen and Felicity Smoak appeared in Central City, Ollie trained Barry, literally shooting him in the back in an attempt to prove whether powers or skills were the better superhero asset to have. Quips came faster than the Flash can run, there was healthy competition between the two heroes, and they saved quite a few lives in the process.

It didn't stop with the event episodes, either. The beauty of The CW is that characters are free to cross over into the other shows whenever a plot point calls for it, which is often enough to be brilliant and not overdone.

THE AGE OF STEEL

35 SUPERMAN

The king of comic superheroes, Superman's renowned for his blue suit, red cape and 'S' shield, with a weakness for kryptonite – and women named Lois

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★☆☆

■ AS THE archetypal comic-book hero, Superman's paved the way for the ever increasingly popular superhero genre. He's starred in comics, radio and television shows, newspaper strips, films and videogames; has an exhaustive array of available merchandise, including suits, dolls, puzzles and playing cards, and has inspired people in, around and outside the media industry. The near indestructible muscle-man, and his worldwide impact, has been subject to scholarly interest for decades, with the term kryptonite now synonymous with Achilles' heel. With Zack Snyder breaking the Superman remake curse with *Man Of Steel*, and looking to continue that story with *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, Henry Cavill and Clark Kent are going to be donning that suit for the foreseeable future.

SUPERMAN

1941 TO 1943

Years Of Release: 1941-43
Superman Played By: Clayton 'Bud' Collyer

Produced and directed by brothers Max and Dave Fleischer, these shorts are genuine classics that – despite the limited storylines – remain powerful to watch to this day.

FILM HISTORIAN LEONARD MALTIN SAID: "No one had attempted anything like these mini-movies, and the Fleischers came through with flying colours – no pun intended. These cartoons broke new ground in terms of staging, lighting and special effects, all in the service of serious storytelling that even Disney hadn't attempted."

Max Fleischer's *Superman* is on Region 1 Blu-ray and DVD for £19.87 and £13.94.

SUPERMAN'S INCREDIBLE JOURNEY FROM COMIC-BOOKS TO CINEMA AND BEYOND

KEY
RADIO
MOVIE
SHORT
ANIMATION
TV SHOW
STAGE PLAY

When he made his debut in the pages of *Action Comics*, 75 years ago, Superman single-handedly launched the superhero genre, and has never been out of print since. Nor has there been a decade in which the Last Son of Krypton hasn't thrived beyond the printed page, on the big screen and small screen in the hands of George Reeves, Christopher Reeve, Tom Welling, Brandon Routh and now Henry Cavill. We chart the incredible further adventures of Superman...

1948 TO 1950

SUPERMAN/ATOM MAN VS SUPERMAN

Years Of Release: 1948 and 1950 **Superman Played By:** Kirk Alyn

Serials were extended movies broken into segments, each of which was screened for one week and ended with a cliffhanger in which Superman and Lois Lane seemingly had no chance of escape. Historically interesting, *Atom Man Vs Superman* represented the first live-action meeting between the Man of Steel and Luthor.

KIRK ALYN SAID: "Being Superman, I had to do everything gracefully, because everything was supposed to be easy for him. If I leaped off the top of a building, I had to land gracefully. I couldn't land flat on my feet the way a stunt man would do it. There were several times when they forgot I was an actor; when they thought I really was Superman. I would pick people up, leap off cliffs, and break things with my hands."

Superman: The Theatrical Serials Collection is available on Region 1 DVD from £22.39.

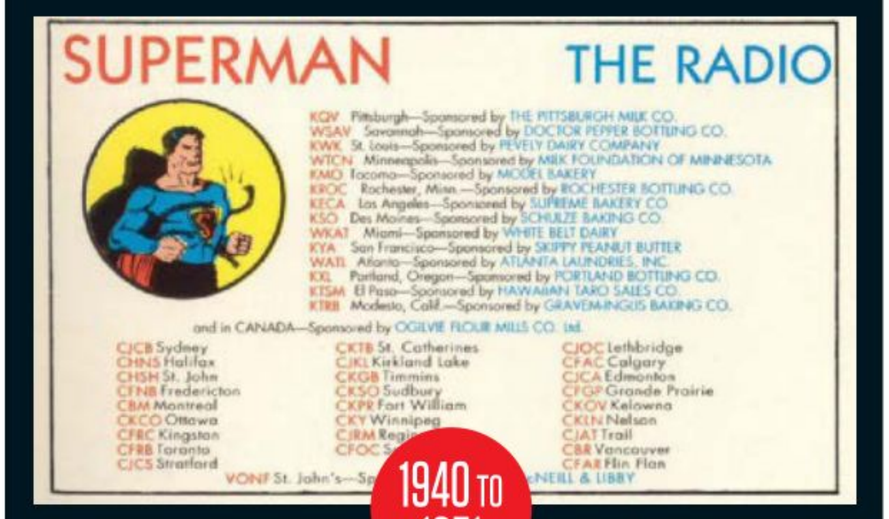
THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

Air Dates: 12 February 1940 – 1 March 1951 **Superman Played By:** Clayton 'Bud' Collyer (1940-1950), Michael Fitzmaurice (1950-51)

Geared mostly for kids, this radio drama elaborated on many elements of the comic-book, including the development of Kryptonite and team-ups between Superman, Batman and Robin.

BUD COLLYER SAID: "I love Superman, the guy who can fly through the air. It's the ultimate. So many people get the least bit embarrassed by fantasy when they're directing or performing it, and it loses all the great charm it should have, but if played honestly and whole-hog all the way it's great."

The Adventures Of Superman is currently out of print on CD. Copies can be found used from £21.43.



1940 TO 1951

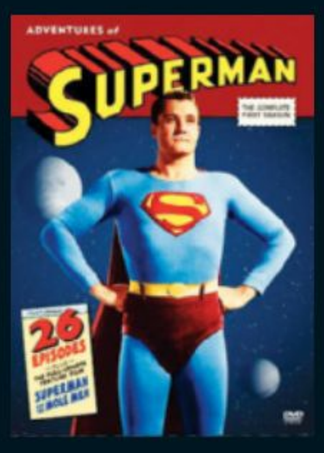
SUPERMAN AND THE MOLE MEN/ THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

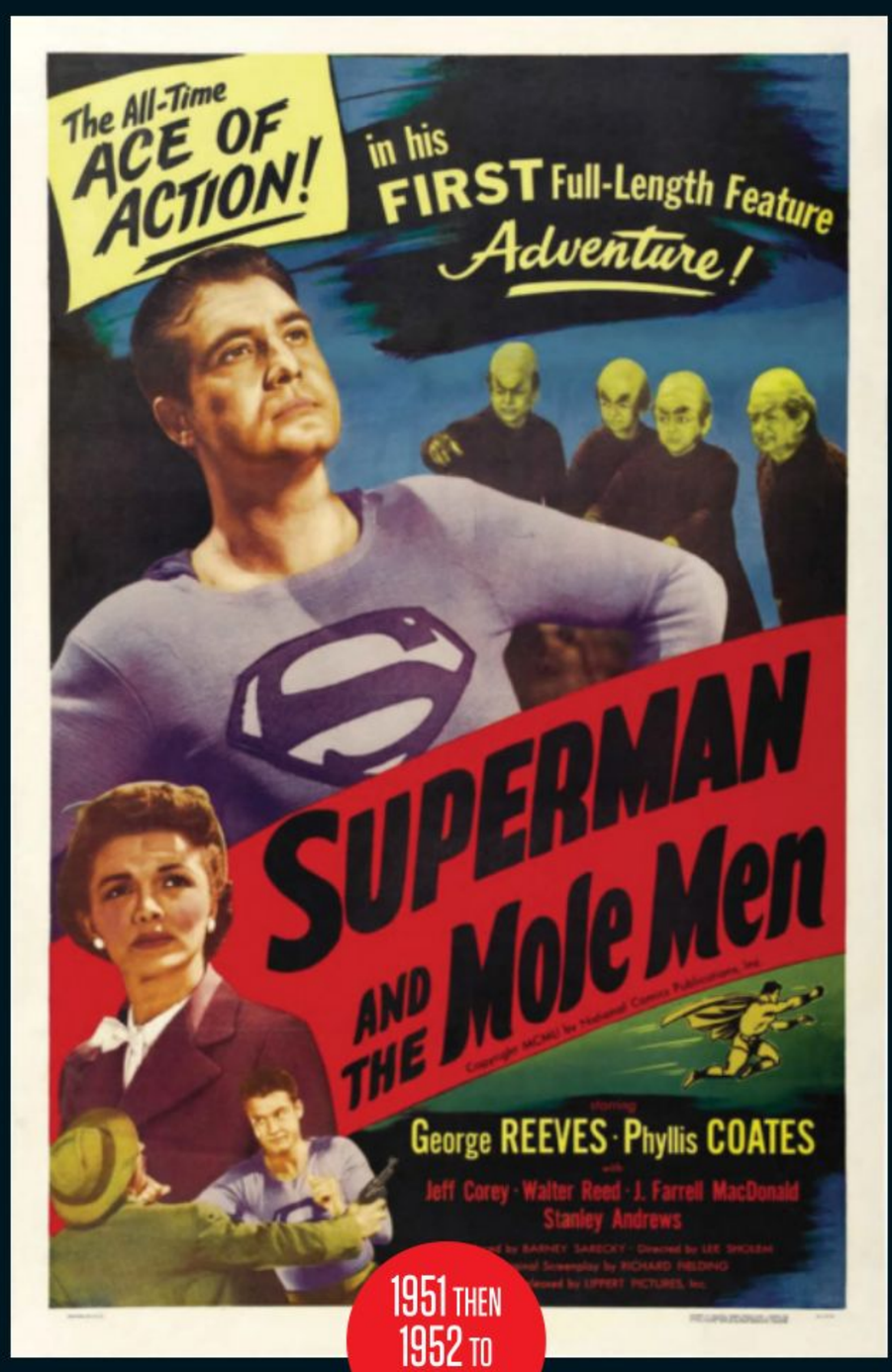
Release Date: 23 November 1951 (*Superman And The Mole Men*) **Air Dates:** 19 September 1952 – 28 April 1959 (*The Adventures Of Superman*) **Superman Played By:** George Reeves

For 25 years, this show was Superman to more than one generation. Starting off dark and noirish, sponsorship feared backlash and the show lightened up and became much more kid-friendly. The incredibly thin budget somehow didn't stop audiences from tuning in.

GEORGE REEVES SAID: "Our writers and sponsors have children, and they are all very careful about doing things on the show that will have no adverse effect on the young audience. We even try in our scripts to give gentle messages of tolerance and stress that a man's colour, race and religious beliefs should be respected."

The Adventures Of Superman: The Complete First Season is available on Region 1 DVD for £18.70.





1951 THEN 1952 TO 1959

1966

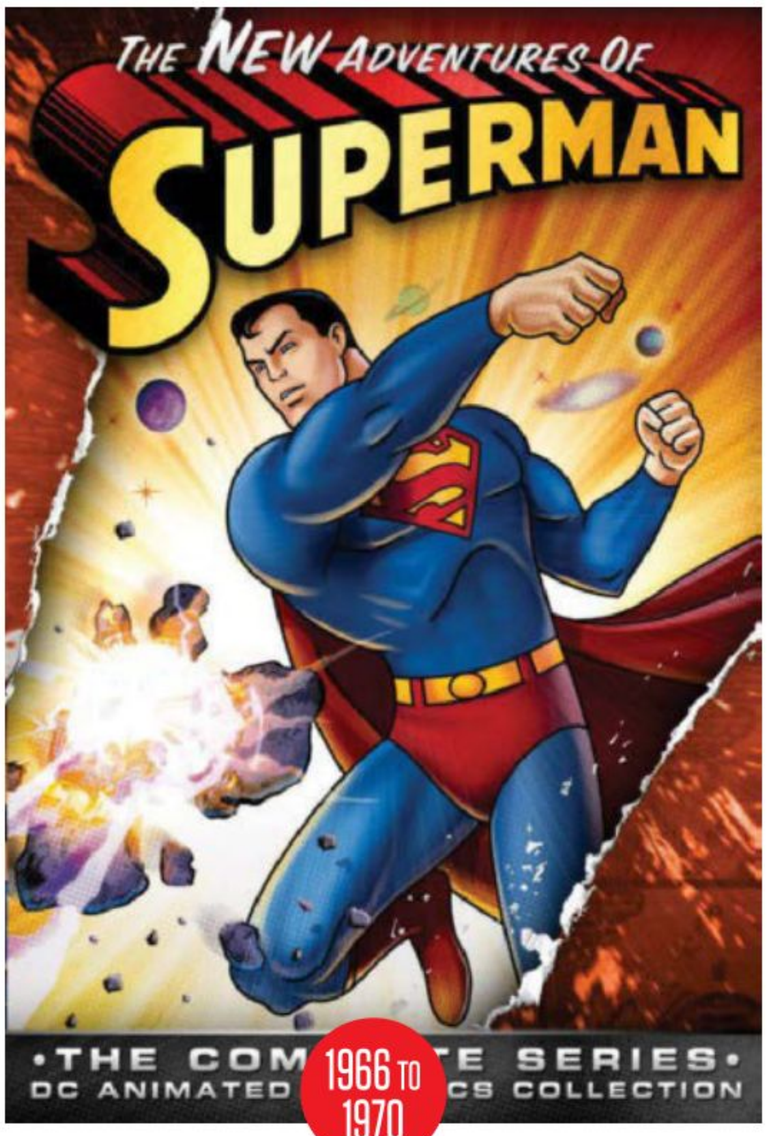
IT'S A BIRD... IT'S A PLANE... IT'S SUPERMAN

Performance Dates: First preview on 9 March, 1966 **Opening Date:** 29 March 1966. Closing Date: 17 July 1966. There were a total of 19 previews and 129 performances **Superman Played By:** Bob Holiday

Co-written by Robert Benton and David Newman, the latter of who co-wrote the first three Christopher Reeve films. Singing and dancing abound as psychiatrist Max Mencken (Jack Cassidy) attempts to undermine Superman psychologically.

DAVID NEWMAN SAID: "*Superman* was fun, but it wasn't camp. We took the character very seriously, though it was playful. A problem was the Adam West *Batman* show. People probably said, 'Why should I pay $12 a ticket when I can watch *Batman* for nothing?' The other thing was that people kept coming up to the box office and saying, 'I want 15 tickets for my son's birthday party on a Saturday matinee.' It wasn't a kid's show, but we were selling out matinees and going empty at night. After three months, it just closed, and that was the end of that."

It's A Bird... It's A Plane... It's Superman cast recording is available on CD from £11.45.



1966 TO 1970

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

Air Dates: 1966-70
Superman Played By: Clayton 'Bud' Collyer

This show consisted of six-minute adventures, with a total of 68 being produced. Between episodes there would also be Superboy shorts. Season One was standalone, while its second year saw it as part of *The Superman/Aquaman Hour of Adventure*, followed by year three's *The Batman/Superman Hour*, while the fourth year was just reruns of previous episodes.

BLOGGER RJ CARTER SAID: "DC was shopping around for a company to breathe animated life into their flagship character. Filmation needed to impress [DC's] Elliot S Maggin, so Lou and his friends did the only thing they could; they pulled a fast one. They hired a roomful of people to pretend to be animators, production assistants and voice talent. Of course, they got the job, Superman flew into living rooms everywhere and the rest, as they say, is history."

The New Adventures Of Superman is available on Region 1 DVD for £15.01.

SUPER FRIENDS

Air Dates: The various shows spanned from 1973 – 1986
Superman Played By: Danny Dark

A kid-friendly version of the Justice League that nonetheless defined the team and characters for a generation under various increasingly convoluted or cringeworthy titles. Oh yeah, there was also Wendy, Marvin, Wonderdog, Gleek, Zan, Jayna and the Wonder Twins ("Shape of a bucket!").

WRITER MICHAEL REAVES SAID: "Superman was kinda fun, because I wrote him as someone who didn't really give a hoot. He's like, 'Forget whipping any man on the planet – I can whip any nation. In fact, I'll take on an entire continent!'"

1973 TO 1996

Super Friends: Season One is available on Region 1 DVD from £15.02.

1978

SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE/ SUPERMAN II/SUPERMAN III/SUPERMAN IV: THE QUEST FOR PEACE

Years Of Release: 1978, 1980, 1983 and 1987
Superman Played By: Christopher Reeve

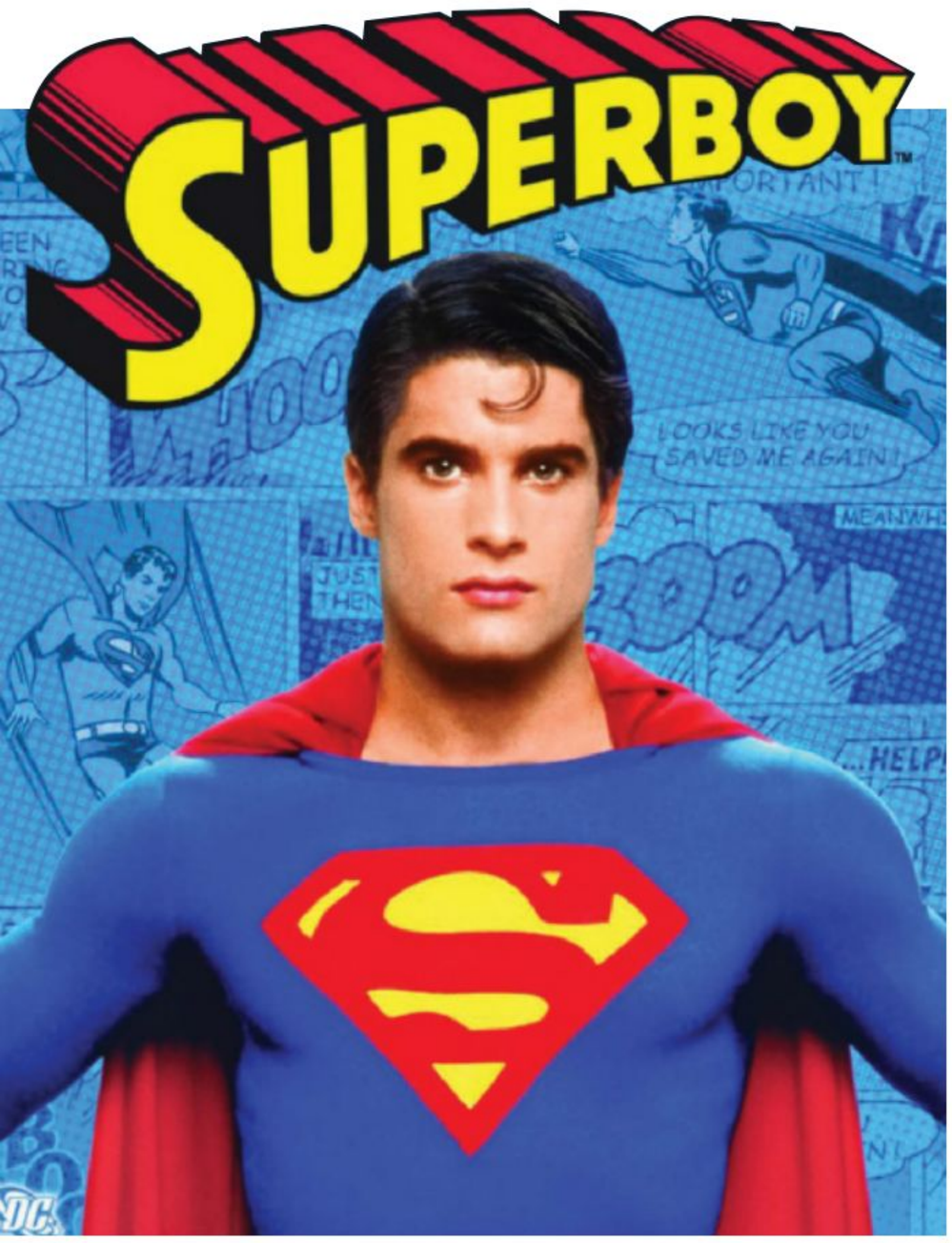
Superman: The Movie became the superhero film against which all others would be measured until recent years. Their watchword, offers director Richard Donner, was Verisimilitude. "It refers to reality," he says. "I had it printed on big signs which were sent to every creative department – wardrobe, casting, special effects, you name it. It was a constant reminder that if we gave in to temptation and parodied Superman, we would only be fooling ourselves." Those films saw Superman going up against Lex Luthor (Gene Hackman), General Zod (Terence Stamp), businessman Ross Webster (Robert Vaughn) and Nuclear Man, the less said about the better.

CHRISTOPHER REEVE SAID: "I was brought up on Superman. I knew the classic stance – hands on hips, cape blowing in the breeze, bullets bouncing off his chest. That's the way 6.5 billion people have loved Superman... and I wouldn't dream of changing it. In a sense, Superman is a stranger in a strange land. He has warmth and a great sense of humour, and while he has sworn to uphold 'truth, justice and the American way,' there's nothing self-conscious about him. That's simply what he believes in, in a world filled with arch-criminals and evil geniuses."

The Superman Motion Picture Anthology is available on Blu-ray for £33.96.

1980

1983



THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY

Air Dates: 1988-1992 **Superboy Played By:** John Haymes Newton (Season One), Gerard Christopher (Season Two-Four)

1982 TO 1992

Superman movie producer Ilya Salkind took to syndicated television for this series, which began with fairly pedestrian stories about things like the fixing of high school basketball games and evolved into tales and villains taken right out of the comics. For a number of reasons, Newton was released after the first season, and Christopher took over.

JOHN HAYMES NEWTON SAID: "I had my own anti-Chris Reeve thing going on [in terms of the nerdy Clark Kent portrayal], which, looking back on it all, I feel like I overdid. I wish I had made Clark more 'insecure' instead of 'not-nerdy.' I also realised about halfway through that one of the things that makes Superman powerful isn't acting powerful as much as how everyone around him reacts to his presence. I mean, I would fly into a scene, and the extras would have absolutely no reaction sometimes."

GERARD CHRISTOPHER SAID: "When I was a child, George Reeves was the Superman I saw first. My upbringing was similar to most people; my mother told me I used to put a towel around my neck and jump off the roof of the garage. When I got the role of Superboy, I was pretty numbed by it. It's not like doing any other character. Roles come and go, but Superman is something that will always linger with me. It was a pretty awesome thing to do, to see the effect this character has on kids – on all people – all over the world. It was a little bit scary, but a lot of fun."

Superboy: The Complete First Season is available on Region 1 DVD from £17.73

THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

Air Dates: 1988-89 **Superman Played By:** Beau Weaver

1988 TO 1989

Another animated series, it was sort of a cross between the *Super Friends* approach and what was being done in the comics at the time, with *Superman* writer John Byrne and *Crisis On Infinite Earths*' Marv Wolfman at the helm.

WRITER MARV WOLFMAN SAID: "I actually named the show *The Adventures Of Superman* for the old TV show, and asked if they could get a little bit of the John Williams score (it was expensive) and put it with new music as well as the old TV show narration to give it a best of all possible worlds feel. It was a pure fan thing for me. I enjoy the Superman character because I've always felt he was the epitome of what a superhero should be; he represents the right in people – the goodness. I just like that completely optimistic viewpoint he had. He does what's right because it's the right thing to do, not for any ulterior motive."

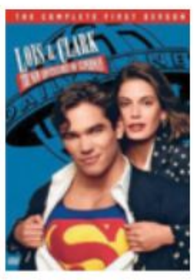
Ruby-Spears Superman is available on Region 1 DVD for £15.10.

LOIS & CLARK: THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

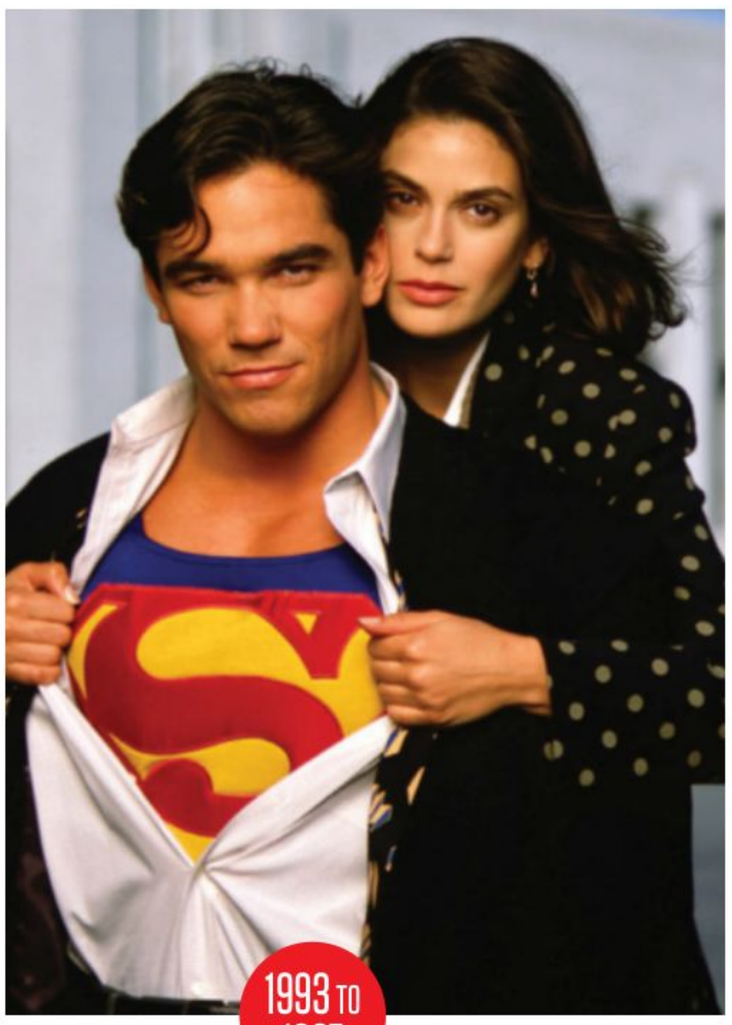
Air Dates: 12 September 1993 – 14 June 1997
Superman Played By: Dean Cain

The approach taken by executive producer Deborah Joy Levine was to emphasise the romantic angle between the characters (Teri Hatcher played Lois Lane) from first meeting to gradually falling in love and even getting married, a point that would actually be reflected in the comics and stay that way until the New 52 in 2011. Says Levine, "The main twist that I did – and the one which people seemed to respond to – is that I wanted a more human Clark. Instead of the idea that Superman had a disguise for himself as a mild-mannered reporter, what I have is a Clark Kent who really wants more than anything else to be human, have a family, be a good writer and reporter."

DEAN CAIN SAID: "The show is a decent reflection of its time; it doesn't take anyone to extremes. Lois was sort of a contemporary Nineties woman who has certain needs; she wants a man to love. If certain feminist people would say she doesn't need a man to love, my opinion is a man needs a woman, and a woman needs a man. I have to admit, when I was looking forward to what I was shooting, it's a lot easier to look forward to a Clark Kent day than a Superman day. A Superman day is a whole big deal. It's kind of a double-edged sword. When I was filming, I'd rather film more Clark than Superman, but when I was watching I liked to see a mixture of both."



Lois & Clark: The New Adventures Of Superman: The Complete First Season is available on DVD for £12.



1993 TO 1997

1996 TO 2000

SUPERMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES

Air Dates: 6 September 1996 – 12 February 2000
Superman Played By: Tim Daly

Given the success of *Batman: The Animated Series,* it's not surprising that the decision was made to give the Man of Steel his own series – a show that was a modern-day classic for the character and offered many intriguing storylines and elements of character development.

WRITER/PRODUCER PAUL DINI SAID: "We de-powered Superman a bit. In the comic-books at the time, Superman had become almost god-like. Yes, he can stop a freight train or knock a mortar shell out of the air, but he's really got to work to do it. What fun is it if he can just automatically do those things? He's a bit more human than that. Also, the mild-mannered reporter we found in the comics didn't really work for us. We looked at classic movies about reporters and tried to give Clark some guts. Because they had to cut the special effects to the bones on the old TV series, they would play up George Reeves' personality as Clark. His Clark was not a fool or a pushover. The thing that we kept very much alive in our version is that he is Clark Kent. Superman is the disguise."

Superman: The Complete Animated Series is available on Region 1 DVD from £32.71.

SMALLVILLE

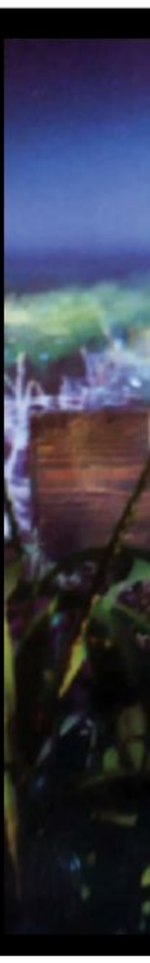
Air Dates: 16 October 2001 – 13 May 2011
Superman Played By: Tom Welling

A ten-year journey that chronicles Clark Kent's journey from a teenager who begins to discover his incredible abilities and gradually evolves toward his ultimate destiny as Superman, encountering many of the people and adversaries from the character's mythos along the way.

CO-CREATOR AL GOUGH SAID: "For us, the costume was never an issue. Batman's always been sort of cool, and people can relate to him. One of the problems with Superman is how do you make him relatable? I think he's always been seen as the goody two-shoes of superheroes. In truth, you never spent that much time in Smallville; there really hasn't been any set mythology there, which was really nice for us because that's why we were sort of able to go into it and be respectful of the Superman mythology without being a slave to it."

CO-CREATOR MILES MILLAR SAID: "The challenge was, how do you do it differently? How do you take an area of his life you haven't seen before and do it in a way that's fresh and original? We never wanted to have massive comic-book villains taking over the world kind of plots. We wanted to keep it real. Also, to us, Clark is like Anakin Skywalker, somebody whose future you know, but you get to see the journey, which is very interesting. Also, you get to see Lex Luthor's journey: how does he become Superman's arch villain when he and Clark start off as friends?"

Smallville: The Complete Series DVD box set is available for £89.



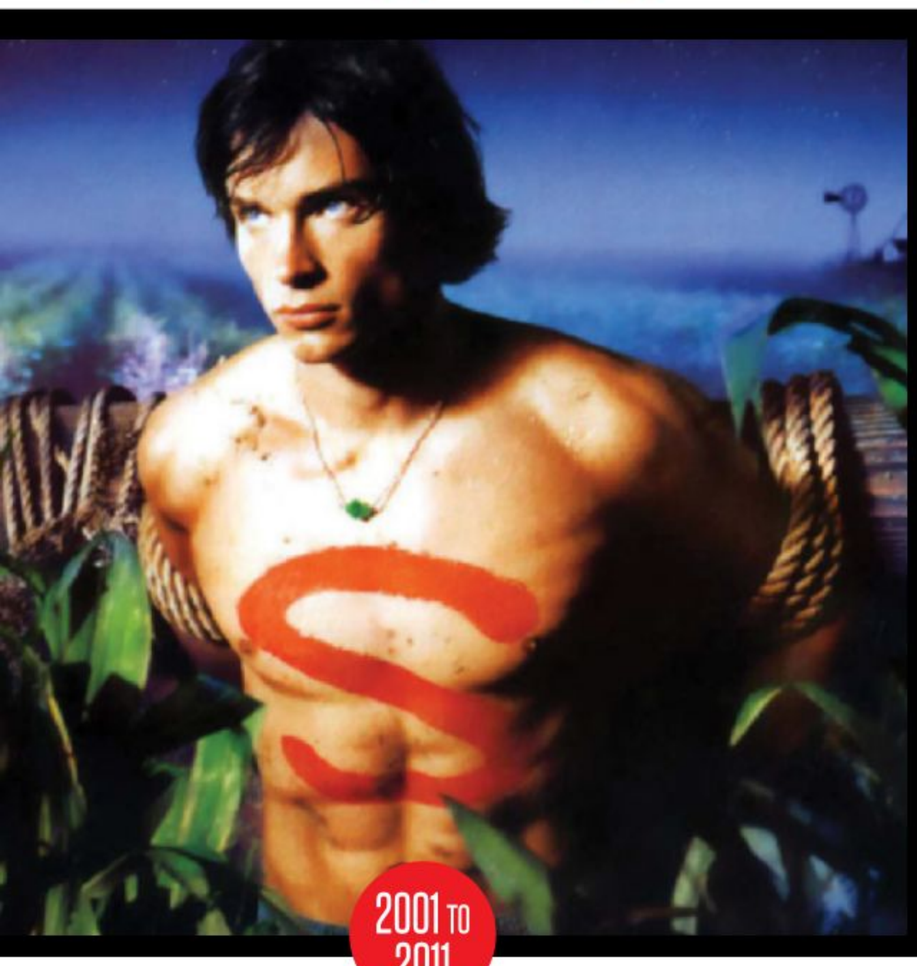
JUSTICE LEAGUE/JUSTICE LEAGUE UNLIMITED

Air Dates:: 17 November 2001 - 29 May 2004 for *Justice League*; 31 July 2004 – 13 May 2006 for *Justice League Unlimited* **Superman Played By:** George Newbern

The first series focuses on Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, The Flash, Martian Manhunter and Hawkgirl. The second opens the roster up to the DCU.

PRODUCER JAMES TUCKER SAID: "On *Justice League*, the main mistake we made was having him get hit all the time and not showing him recovering and coming right back. We erred on the side of caution, because Superman theoretically should be able to handle all of these problems by himself. I don't think we made him weaker, we just didn't cover our bases as far as showing him to be Superman."

Justice League Seasons One and Two is available on region-free Blu-ray for £58.61 and £30.70. *Justice League: Unlimited* Seasons One and Two are available on DVD for £24.41 and £13.16.



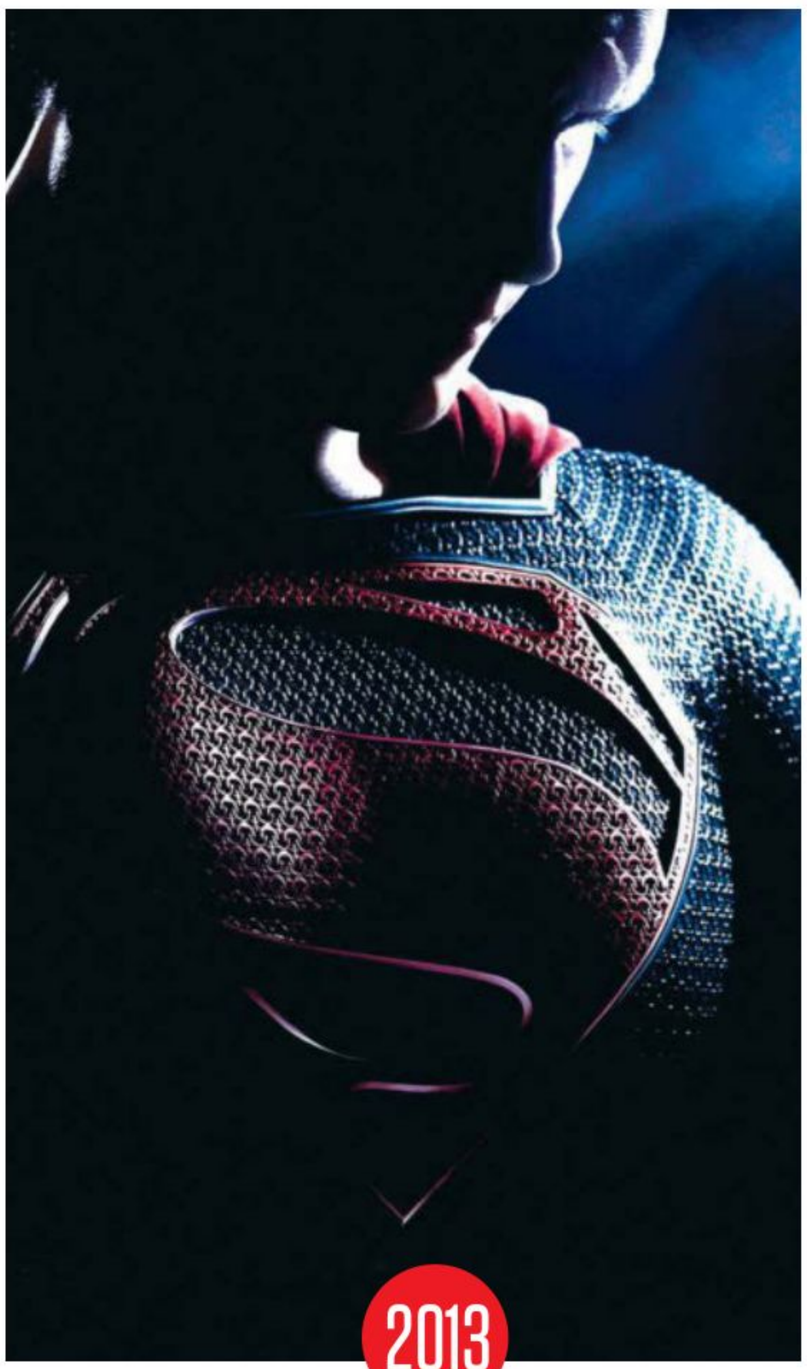
SUPERMAN RETURNS

Release Date: 28 June 2006
Superman Played By: Brandon Routh

After numerous aborted attempts at reviving the Man of Steel, Bryan Singer crafted a scenario that was essentially a sequel to Richard Donner's films. Brandon Routh was cast very much in the Christopher Reeve mould, and the film itself – which had Superman go up against Kevin Spacey's Lex Luthor – was felt by many to be too mired in the past to move the franchise forward.

BRANDON ROUTH SAID: "What's interesting about this film is when Clark returns from his journey, the world have changed. He's not found what he went after, and he feels alone. He's not even sure if he wants to use powers. It's at that point that he really tries to connect with the world. I mean, he's an alien, but he's human. He lives here. The whole movie's about his humanity. He's only alien because he came from a different planet. It doesn't necessarily mean he's not human."

Superman Returns is available as part of the *Superman Motion Picture Anthology* for £33.96.



MAN OF STEEL

Release Date: 14 June 2013
Superman Played By: Henry Cavill

Not much needs to be said beyond the fact that Zack Snyder directs and that it is a reboot – as well as a regrounding – of the Superman mythology. Despite the controversy dealing with Superman's treatment of General Zod, *Man Of Steel*, along with Henry Cavill, has defined Superman for this generation like Christopher Reeve before him.

HENRY CAVILL SAID: "Superman genuinely represents hope, struggle in the face of adversity as opposed to rolling over and giving up. That's the point; the hope that one will win as opposed to turning one's back on hope and giving up, or become the thing we initially disliked or felt strongly about. That's his place in this world. It's genuinely the representation of hope. No matter how many times I told people this film was not dark and gritty, they kept saying it. I'm glad they're starting to see in the latest trailer that it's not dark and gritty at all. It's more realistic than previous incarnations, but without losing the wonder of what Superman is."

THE 10 BATMAN STORIES YOU MUST READ

ONE OF COMICS' MOST ENDURING ANTIHEROES, BATMAN HAS GONE FROM THE KITSCH WEIRDNESS OF THE FIFTIES AND SIXTIES, TO THE DARK NEO-NOIR OF THE EIGHTIES AND BEYOND. HERE ARE TEN OF THE BEST BAT-BOOKS YOU – AND FUTURE FILMMAKERS – NEED TO READ...

36

BATMAN

Superhero alias of Bruce Wayne, billionaire son of murdered Thomas and Martha Wayne turned black-clad terror of the night and world's greatest detective

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

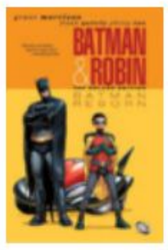
■ AS A child Bruce Wayne was forever changed by the murder of his parents. Swearing vengeance on the criminals of Gotham City, he trained his mind and body to become the crime fighter known as Batman.

He remains a fan favourite because he is psychologically complex with a spectacular rogue's gallery of villains and his superpowers are in effect his intellect and strength. He's just a man, but a man with a will of iron and deep rooted sense of justice.

Batman has gone through many incarnations, from the high camp of Adam West's Sixties television serial to the dark and brooding *The Animated Series* of the 1990s. Following outstanding graphic novels in the 1980s including Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns* and Grant Morrison's *Arkham Asylum*, the character underwent a renaissance on the big screen with Tim Burton's *Batman* and its sequels. The franchise was again revived by Christopher Nolan in 2005 with *Batman Begins* to much critical acclaim, and now he looks to be reborn once more for *Batman v Superman*.

Batman & Robin: Batman Reborn

Writer: Grant Morrison **Artists:** Frank Quitely, Philip Tan **First Published:** 2009-2010 **RRP:** £10.99



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A fresh take on the Batman concept, with Dick Grayson replacing the (temporarily) deceased Bruce Wayne and the Caped Crusader's assassin son Damian forming the other half of the Dynamic Duo, this was the most refreshing turn for the Batman franchise in years. Subsequent volumes maintain the same entertaining Sixties-TV-series-as-directed-by-David Lynch tone.

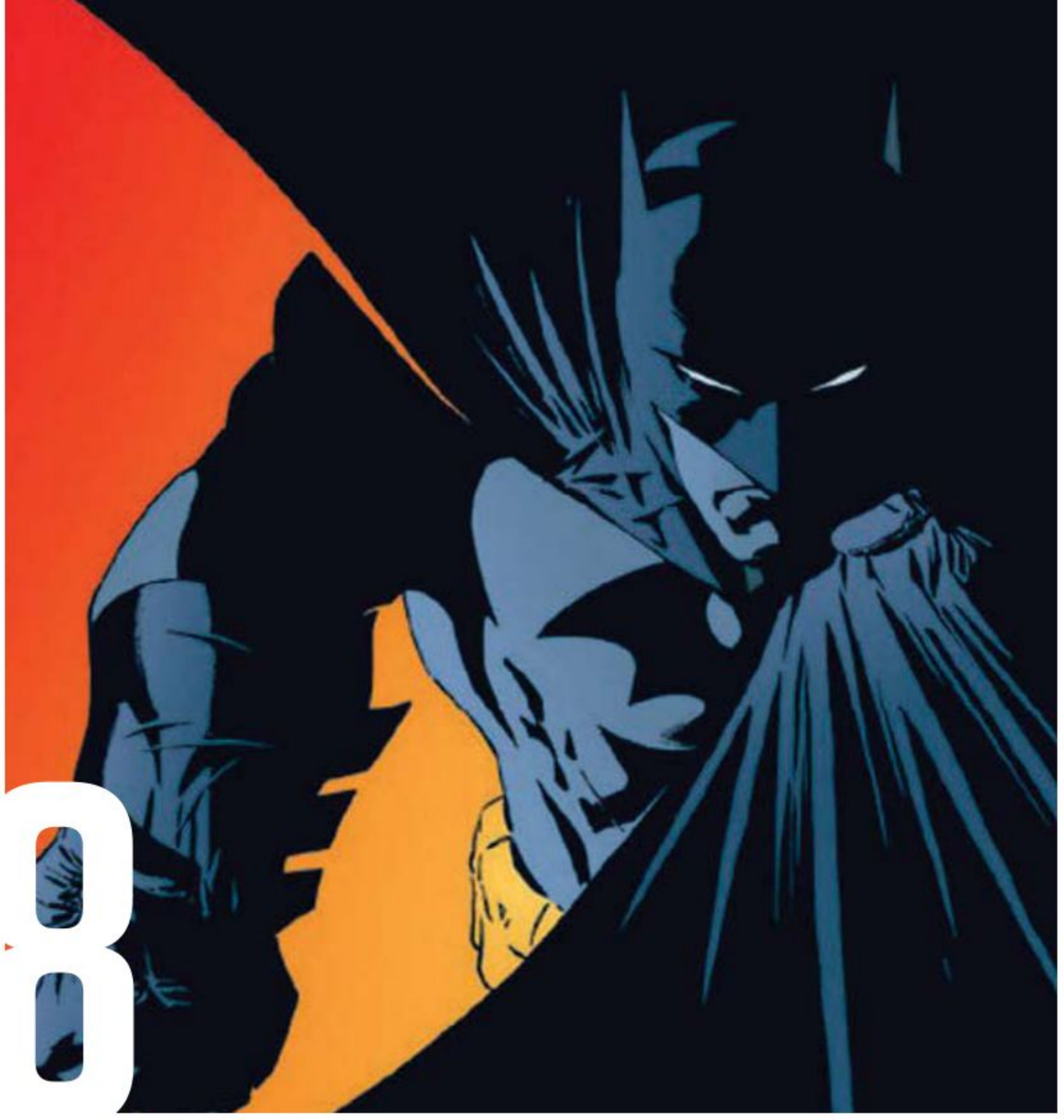
Batman & Dracula: Red Rain

Writer: Doug Moench **Artist:** Kelley Jones
First Published: 1991 **RRP:** OOP

9

The first instalment in the Elseworlds *Batman: Vampire* series is far better than anything this high-concept should be. Batman becomes part-vampire, and has to use his new supernatural abilities to battle Count Dracula in a fittingly dark tale, which illustrates the variety of stories that fit the superhero.

© DC Comics



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Batman: Son Of The Demon

Writer: Mike Barr **Artist:** Jerry Bingham **First Published:** 1987 **RRP:** £22.99

Batman forms an unstable partnership with long-time enemy Ra's Al Ghul, and at last pursues a relationship with his daughter, Talia, only to be forced into a terrible choice when confronted with a dangerous foe. Bruce Wayne's humanity is prominent in this out-of-continuity tale, which deals with the concept of Batman having a son, later reintroduced into the DC Universe by Grant Morrison.

7

Batman: Black & White

Writer: Various **Artist:** Various **First Published:** 1996 **RRP:** £14.99

An anthology of Batman stories created by the industry's best and brightest, this offers a creative head rush in its presentation of the many different shades within the Dark Knight character. In retrospect, the stories that stand out the most are the duality-themed 'Two Of A Kind' by Bruce Timm and Ted McKeever's 'Perpetual Mourning', in which an autopsy conducted by Batman unravels the fate of the body lying before him. Like *Red Rain*, it shows that any kind of Batman story can work when done by the right people.

MEET THE BAT-FAMILY

A beginner's guide to Batman's confusing cast of allies and franchise holders

KATE KANE

First Appearance: *52* #11 (July 2006)
Past Alias: None
Current Alias: Batwoman

A relevant reboot of a forgotten (and deeply patronising) Fifties Bat-housewife, Katherine 'Kate' Kane is a former US Marine and highly capable crimefighter who operates in a world outside Batman's – although clearly has the big guy's blessing and respect, as she deals with allies and enemies of her own.

JASON TODD

First Appearance: *Batman* #357 (March 1983)
Past Alias: Robin (the second one)
Current Alias: Red Hood

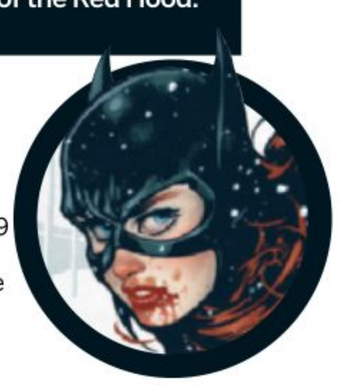
Grayson's replacement as Robin, street kid Todd was first encountered trying to jack the tyres from the Batmobile. Becoming increasingly irritating from there, readers voted to kill him off. Resurrected years later, Todd returned as an antagonist, before easing into the role of the Red Hood.

TIM DRAKE

First Appearance: *Batman* #436 (August 1989)
Past Alias: Robin (the third one)
Current Alias: Red Robin

After two Robins defined by their physicality, Drake defined himself by brains – working out Dick Grayson and Bruce Wayne's identities, and making the case that Batman needs a Robin to keep him grounded. He took on the alias of Red Robin after falling out with Batman, and now leads the Teen Titans.

BARBARA GORDON



First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #359 (January 1967)
Past Alias: Batgirl (the first one), Oracle
Current Alias: Batgirl (again)

Original Batgirl and daughter of James Gordon, Babs became a superhero information broker, super-hacker and leader of the Birds Of Prey when the Joker shot her, confining her to a wheelchair. Back on her feet, she's Batgirl once more.

DICK GRAYSON

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #38 (April 1940)
Past Alias: Robin (the first one), Nightwing, Batman (for a little bit)
Current Alias: Nightwing (again)

Orphaned circus acrobat Grayson joined Batman in his war on crime before going solo as Nightwing. Following Batman's (temporary) death, he briefly dons the cowl before eventually (and without explanation) returning to the guise of Nightwing.

CASSANDRA CAIN

First Appearance: *Batman* #567 (July 1999)
Past Alias: Batgirl (the second one)
Current Alias: Black Bat

Raised by assassins, Cain was a mute who spoke only the language of punching. Often battling her heritage, she eventually became leader of the League Of Assassins. Bad writing and narrative u-turns ensued until she returned as the 'Batman of Hong Kong', Black Bat.

DAMIAN WAYNE

First Appearance: *Batman: Son Of The Demon* (1987)
Past Alias: None
Current Alias: Robin (the fifth one)

The result of an ill-advised coupling between Bruce Wayne and Talia Al Ghul, Damian was raised as heir to the League Of Assassins. The spoiled psychopath is rescued by Bruce and trained by Dick, Damian later dies in a conspiracy of his mother's undertaking.

STEPHANIE BROWN

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #647 (August 1992)
Past Alias: Spoiler, Robin (the fourth one), Batgirl (the third one)
Current Alias: Unknown

Donning the purple cape of Spoiler, Brown fell for Tim Drake, their relationship ending when she took the mantle of Robin, then was forced to fake her own death. Returning as Batgirl, Babs replaced her, and she hasn't been mentioned since.

DISHONOURABLE MENTIONS

The laughable low-points in Batman's comic-book career

BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT STRIKES AGAIN

Frank Miller/Lynn Varley

5 The follow-up to the classic compliments Varley's superb art with dull, computer-aided colouring and a rambling storyline that undermines the original by suggesting he faked his death.

BATMAN: KNIGHTFALL PART TWO: WHO RULES THE NIGHT

Various/Various

4 Following Bane's 'breaking of the Bat', sub-parodic 'extreme' vigilante Azrael steps in with a spikey armoured Bat-costume in a thinly veiled attempt to be the new Spawn.

BATMAN: THE BLUE, THE GRAY, AND THE BAT

Elliot S Maggin/Alan Weiss

3 Batman is reimagined as a Civil War-era crime-fighter, protecting Abraham Lincoln's gold in this painfully dull and contrived Elseworlds stocking filler.

BATMAN: DIGITAL JUSTICE

Pepe Moreno

2 Revolutionary for all of five seconds in 1990, the computer-generated *Digital Justice*, featuring a non-story about a 'Joker virus', now looks as sophisticated as an episode of *ReBoot*.

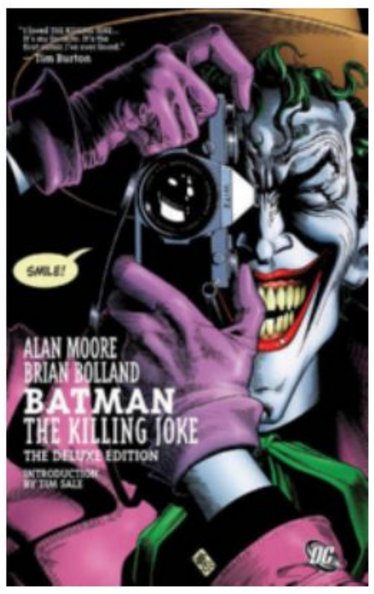
ALL-STAR BATMAN

Frank Miller/Jim Lee

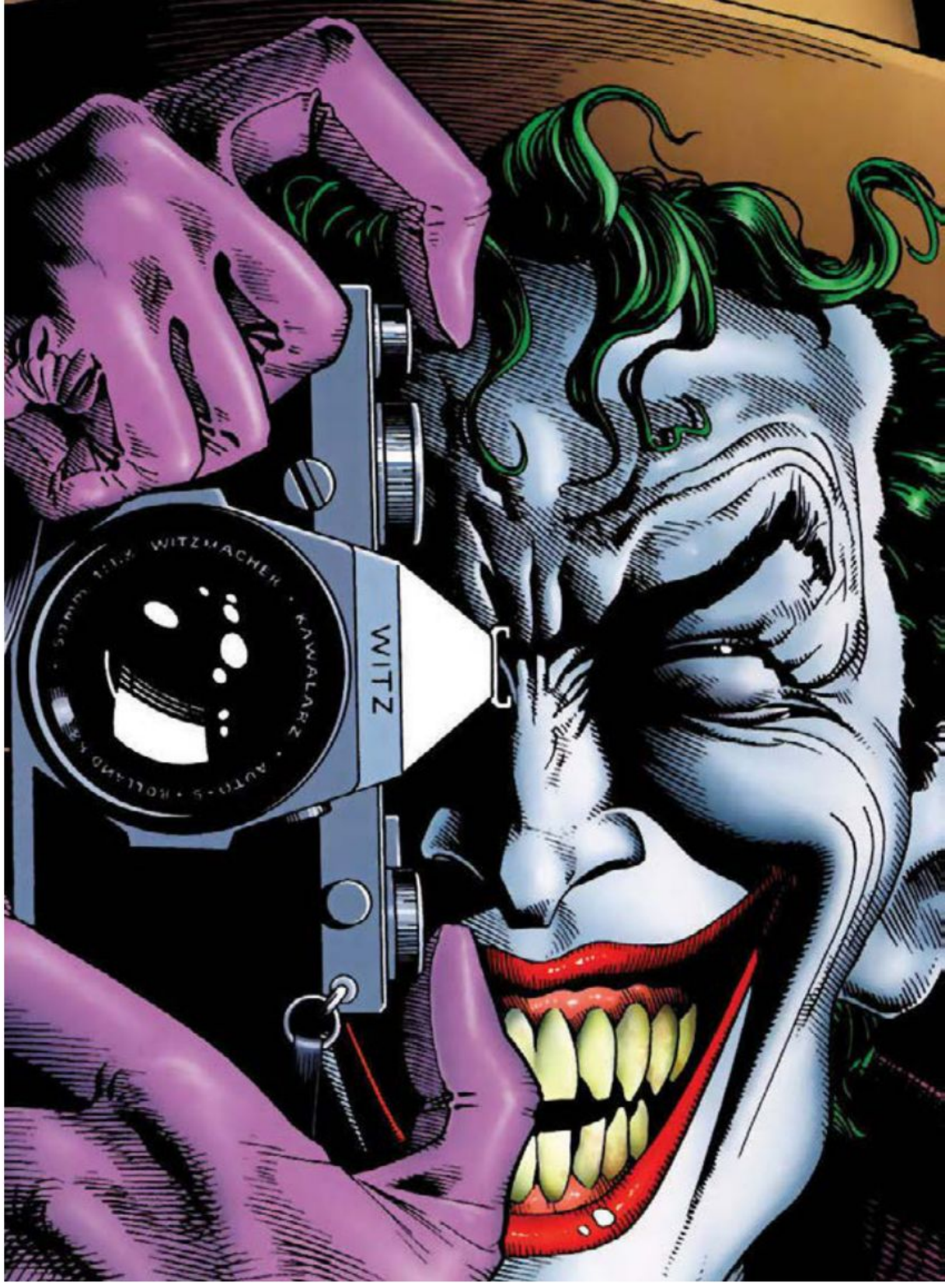
1 Frank Miller goes beyond parody with his unlikeable dick Batman that birthed a thousand memes: "What are you, retarded?" he barks at an orphaned Dick Grayson, "I'm the goddam Batman."

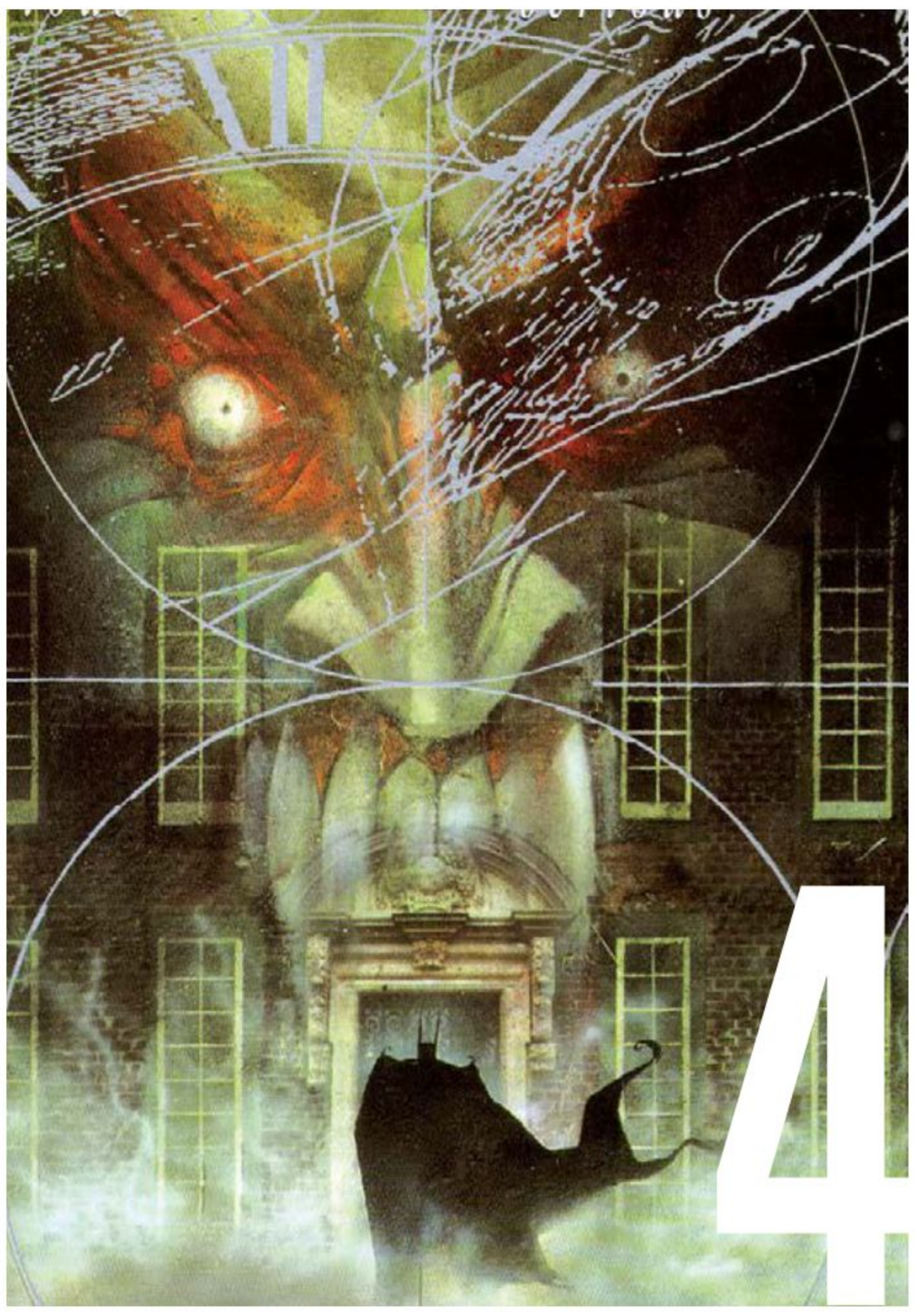
Batman: The Killing Joke

Writer: Alan Moore **Artist:** Brian Bolland
First Published: 1988 **RRP:** £11.99



6 The defining Joker story sees the Clown Prince paralysing Barbara Gordon by shooting her in the spine, while later showing images of her to the Batgirl's captive father, Jim Gordon – it's a horrifically dark portrayal of Batman's ultimate enemy coupled to his sad, questionable origin story. While *The Killing Joke* would be vital to the development of Barbara Gordon in the ensuing years after its publication, the story itself is justifiably remembered for exploring how close the Dark Knight is to the Joker in his psychological make-up.





4

Batman: Black Mirror

Writer: Scott Snyder **Artists:** Jock, Francesco Francavilla **First Published:** 2010-2011 **RRP:** £22.99

5 Scott Snyder's first Dark Knight story sees Dick Grayson tackling a series of murders that may be linked to the Gordon family's violent history. This is an incredibly tight Batman detective mystery, told from multiple perspectives and building to a gut-wrenching conclusion – why did it take so long for DC to start publishing stories like this again? It also cements Grayson's place as Batman, a paradigm that gave the original Robin the crucial character development he'd been lacking for years.

Arkham Asylum: A Serious House On Serious Earth

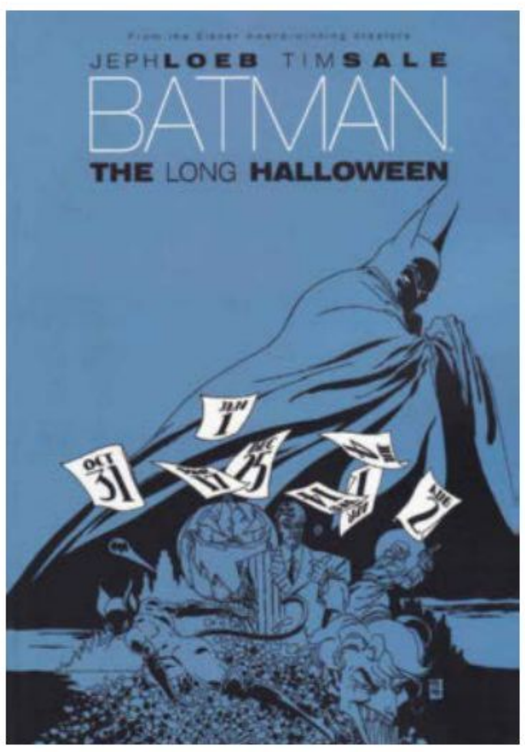
Writer: Grant Morrison **Artist:** Dave McKean
First Published: 1989 **RRP:** £10.99

A Batman story quite unlike any other, this visually surreal answer to the darker stories of the Seventies and Eighties is an unsettling study of the iconic Gotham City prison, as well as its twisted beginnings as a correctional institution. Dave McKean's extraordinary and disturbing artwork results in a unique visual experience, as the Dark Knight's disturbing range of foes put him through a symbolism-ridden hell.

Batman: The Long Halloween

Writer: Jeph Loeb **Artist:** Tim Sale
First Published: 1996-1997 **RRP:** £14.99

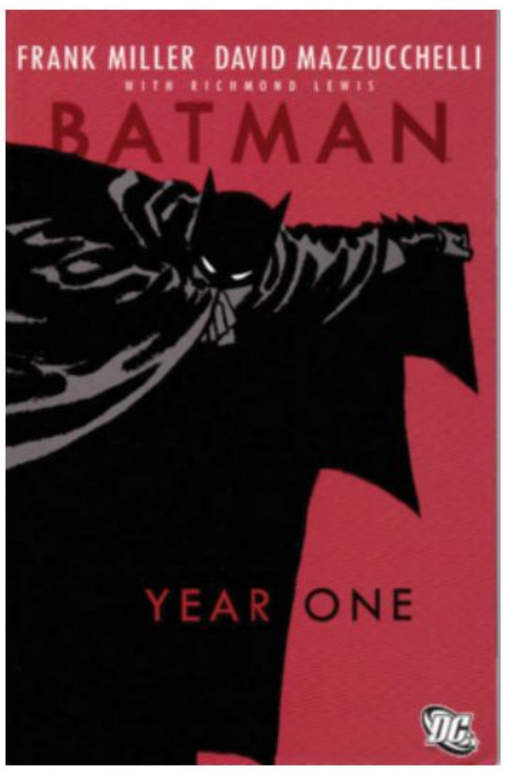
A year-long mystery sees the Dark Knight, post-*Year One*, dealing with a figure known as the Holiday Killer, who wipes out a member of the Falcone crime syndicate during a holiday of every month. This also depicts Harvey Dent's transformation into Two-Face, and the way *The Long Halloween* encompasses every downtrodden aspect of Gotham's structure, from crime and law enforcement to Batman himself creates an engaging picture of this fictional locale.

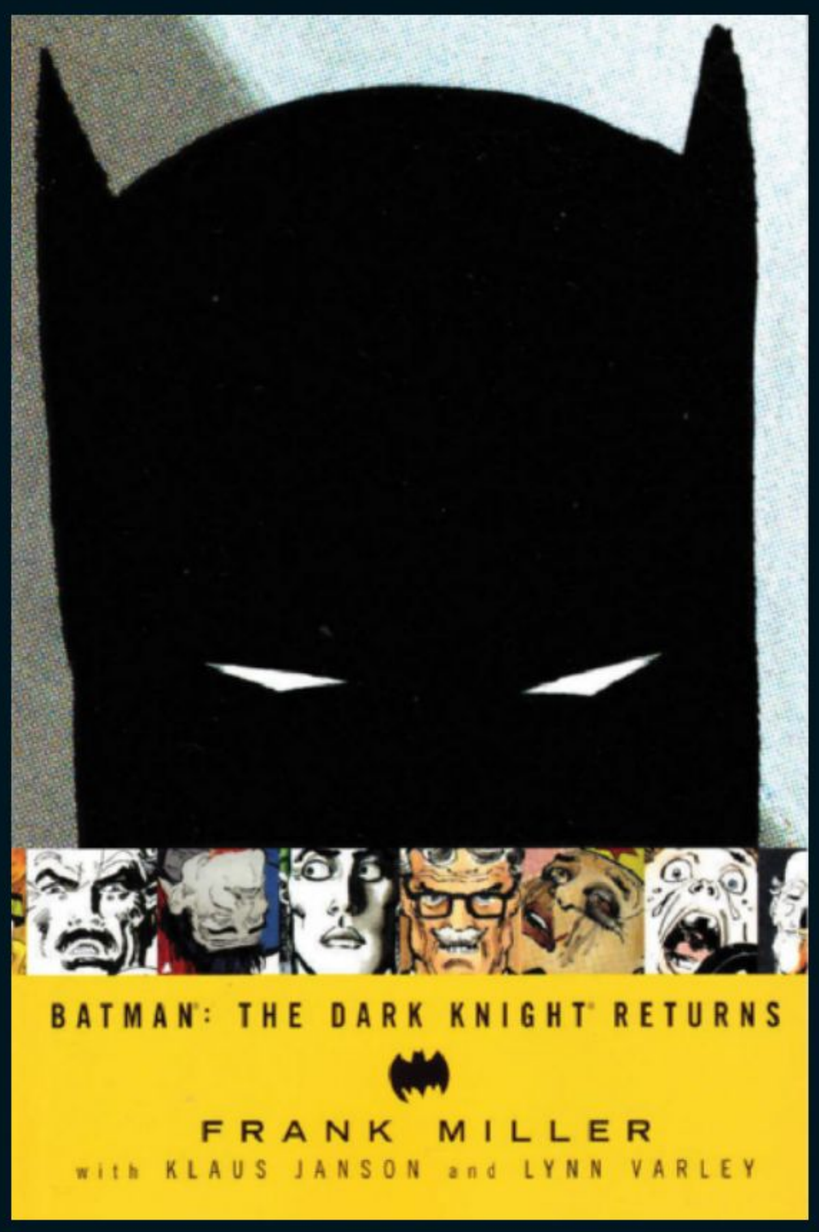


Batman: Year One

Writer: Frank Miller **Artist:** David Mazzucchelli **First Published:** 1987 **RRP:** £11.99

2 The greatest origin story ever told. Frank Miller's grittier reinterpretation of Batman's creation is bleakly presented alongside Jim Gordon's rough initiation into the corrupt Gotham City Police Department, an extremely raw depiction of a broken city that calls for a superhero. We see the foundations of Bruce Wayne's obsessions, his early errors and the remarkably dramatic birth of Batman in four exceptionally told chapters – if you're a new Batman reader, start here.





Batman: The Dark Knight Returns

Writer: Frank Miller **Artists:** Frank Miller, Klaus Janson
First Published: 1986 **RRP:** £12.99

1 *Year One* is a terrific mandate of what a Batman story should be. This is that same Batman's end, coming out of retirement to face a new terror. Featuring a final battle with the Joker and a showdown with Superman, this dark dystopian story transformed the depiction of Batman forever.

All of these graphic novels are available from DC Comics via the Comixology app.

37

THE JOKER

Batman's greatest enemy and the ultimate comic-book villain, depicted on screen by the likes of Heath Ledger, Jack Nicholson and Cesar Romero

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

WITH HIS purple suit, bright green hair and maniacal grin, the Joker is one of the most instantly recognisably villains in pop culture and Batman's greatest foe.

There's no one back-story to the character and as he's quite mad, there probably isn't one you could rely on. This psychopathic-turned Clown Prince of Crime revels in his battle of wits with Batman and is the perfect villainous foil, bringing death, destruction and chaos to a Gotham Batman strives to make better.

He's taken many dark turns over the years, including the paralysis of Batgirl Barbara Gordon and the murders of both second Robin Jason Todd and Commissioner Gordon's wife Sarah Essen.

JOKER'S WILD

THE JOKER REPRESENTS A MIRROR IMAGE OF BATMAN, A CHARACTER THAT STRADDLES A SIMILAR LINE OF MADNESS BUT WITH AN OPPOSING AMORALITY. A CARTOON CLOWN, TERRORIST AND TWISTED SERIAL KILLER, THE JOKER IS AS FLUSH WITH DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS AS THE DARK KNIGHT HIMSELF. WE EXPLORE HIS CREATION AND EVOLUTION...

Batman has the best rogues gallery of any comic book character by an extraordinary distance. The various goblins of Spider-Man and interplanetary warlords of Superman have nothing on the Dark Knight's band of themed freaks, who have dovetailed into darker versions of their original, almost novelty-like creations as the decades have gone by.

Of all the richly developed characters that have hassled Bruce Wayne for 70 years, though, it's obvious that the Joker stands astride them all as his ultimate foe. A brilliantly malleable, unpredictable character, the Joker can be everything from a grinning punch bag or a serial killer to a criminal mastermind. He is an uncontrollable random force, with as many facets as his vigilante opposite, which makes him an endless font of narrative possibilities, as well as a figure destined to haunt Batman and push the superhero to the very edge of his founding morality.

The Joker debuted in the first issue of Batman's solo title, released in 1940. His creation is disputed – officially, like everything else relating to the Dark Knight, artist Bob Kane is credited for the character, with input from writer Bill Finger, while illustrator Jerry Robinson inspired the finished look with a Joker card from a pack of playing cards. It's a little cloudy in reality, though. Robinson claims he illustrated the finished version of the Joker – which he said garnered universal approval from his peers at the time – while Kane states that he was actually inspired by a picture of Conrad Veidt's 1928 film *The Man Who Laughs*, provided to him by Finger, which bears an undeniable resemblance to the finished work.

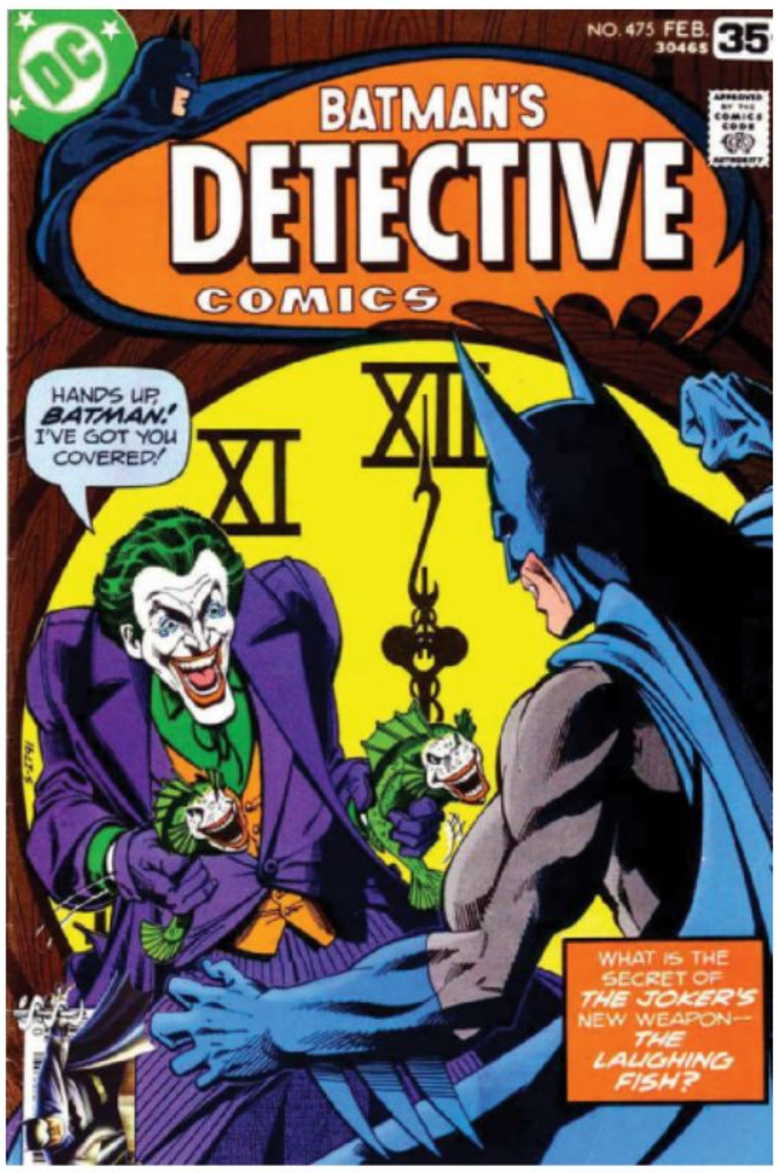
"We weren't happy about it," Robinson told SciFiNow in 2010 regarding the lack of credit afforded

to Kane's Batman collaborators. "But that seemed to be the convention of the time. I was so young that I didn't question it, but Bill fretted about not getting a dual credit, which he should have got because he was the co-creator. I was there, so I knew what he contributed. It was up to Bob to credit us, which unfortunately he didn't do during Bill's lifetime or his own. I guess if he survived me I wouldn't have gotten credit either!"

In a 1994 interview with Frank Lovece, Kane explained his side of the story. "Bill Finger had a book with a photograph of Conrad Veidt, and showed it to me and said, 'Here's the Joker.' Jerry Robinson had absolutely nothing to do with it, but he'll always say he created it till he dies. He brought in a playing card, which we used for a couple of issues for him [the Joker] to use as his playing card."

Of course, we will never know how it really went down. Kane received all the credit for the development of Batman's universe, and the lack of acknowledgment afforded to anyone else became a fractious issue over time. It's another sad by-product of the rights issues that plagued comic-books in the early days of the industry. However, in most fan circles, Robinson, who passed away in 2011, is commonly known as the Joker's creator.

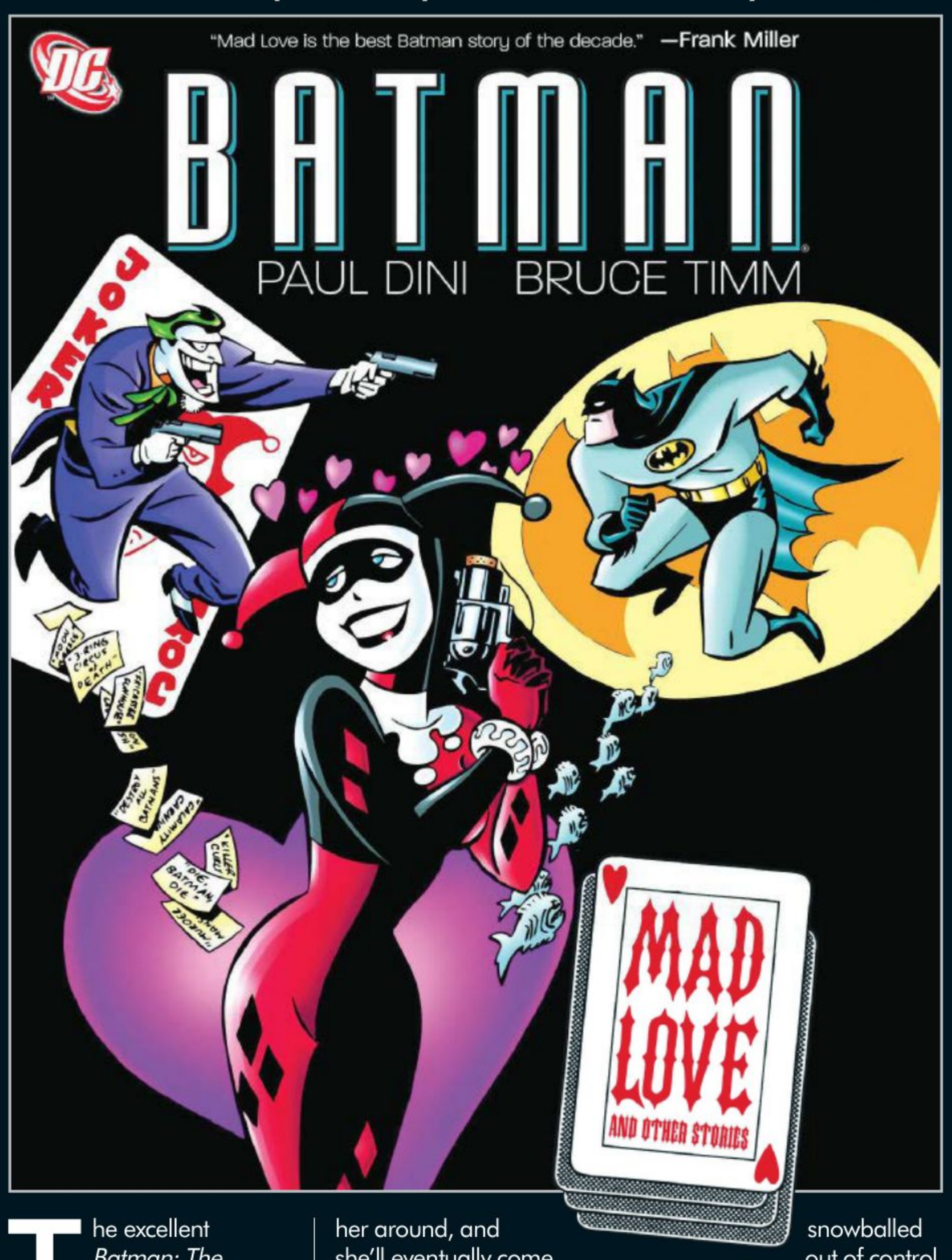
In the villain's first appearance, his murderous trademark – leaving his victims' corpses with smiles on their faces – is introduced, which is still the most disturbing element of his methodology as a character. It wasn't until *Detective Comics* issue 168 in 1951 that we'd learn The Joker's origins, however; that he was once known as the unremarkable crook Red Hood before he took a fall into a vat of chemicals. While early stories did portray the Joker as a killer, the character was neutered along with most others in the Fifties as a result of the creative torpedoing of comics following



The Joker: consistently at the forefront of Batman's rogues gallery.

MAD LOVE

How Joker's love interest, Harley Quinn, became an important part of Batman mythos

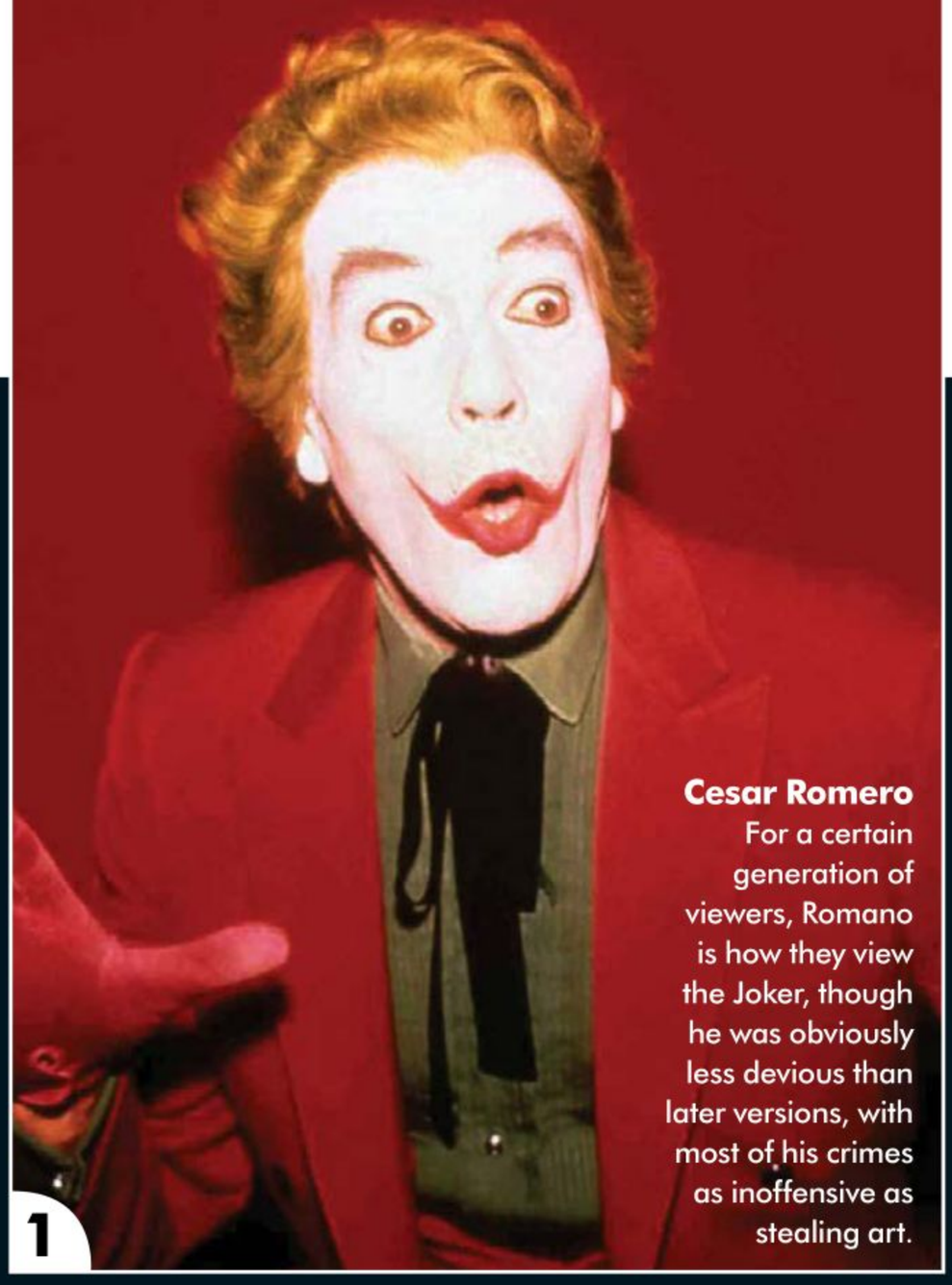


The excellent *Batman: The Animated Series* has contributed one major factor to the overall Batman lore – Harley Quinn, the Joker's on-again off-again 'love'. Rather than simply being the female version of the Clown Prince, what's engaging about Quinn is the way she's written as a tragic figure bearing an unrequited love. The Joker will always lose interest in Quinn and kick her around, and she'll eventually come crawling back regardless of how badly she's treated, mirroring a real-life abusive relationship.

Even more unsettling is Quinn's origin, though. Once a psychiatrist working in Arkham Asylum (with the classically ludicrous 'real' name of Harleen Quinzel), the Joker was her patient, gradually bonding with the doctor until she became obsessed with him. It all snowballed out of control from there, really, but she's easily the most interesting of Batman's modern villains, and a great exponent of the Joker's importance in Batman lore. We recommend checking out *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, where Batman stumbles across audio tapes that play out the conversations between Quinn and the Joker that led to her descent into villainy.

THE MANY FACES OF THE JOKER

INFLUENTIAL TAKES ON THE JOKER ACROSS TV, FILM, COMICS AND BUILDING BLOCKS

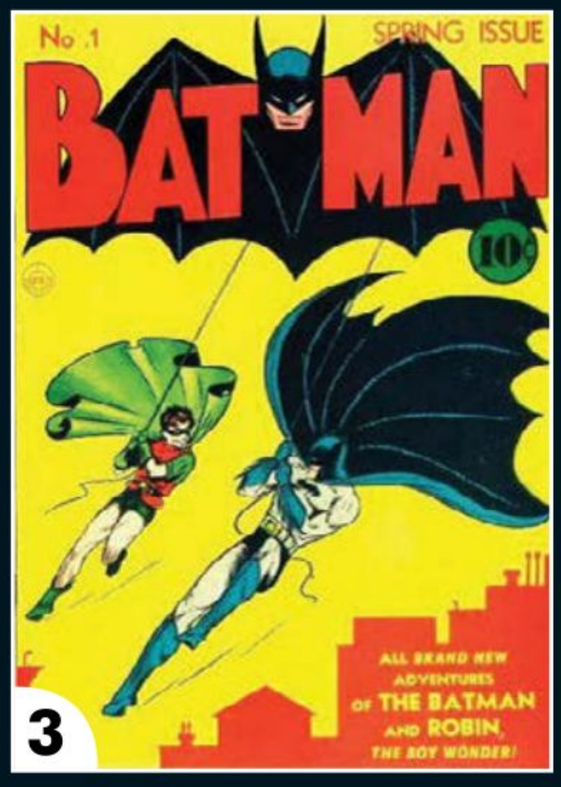


Cesar Romero
For a certain generation of viewers, Romano is how they view the Joker, though he was obviously less devious than later versions, with most of his crimes as inoffensive as stealing art.

1

2

Jack Nicholson
Brilliant, screen-stealing and unique, but in a different way to Heath Ledger, Tim Burton's *Batman* brought audiences a kind of twisted, freakish antagonist that they'd never really experienced before, tackled with bizarre fury by Nicholson.



3

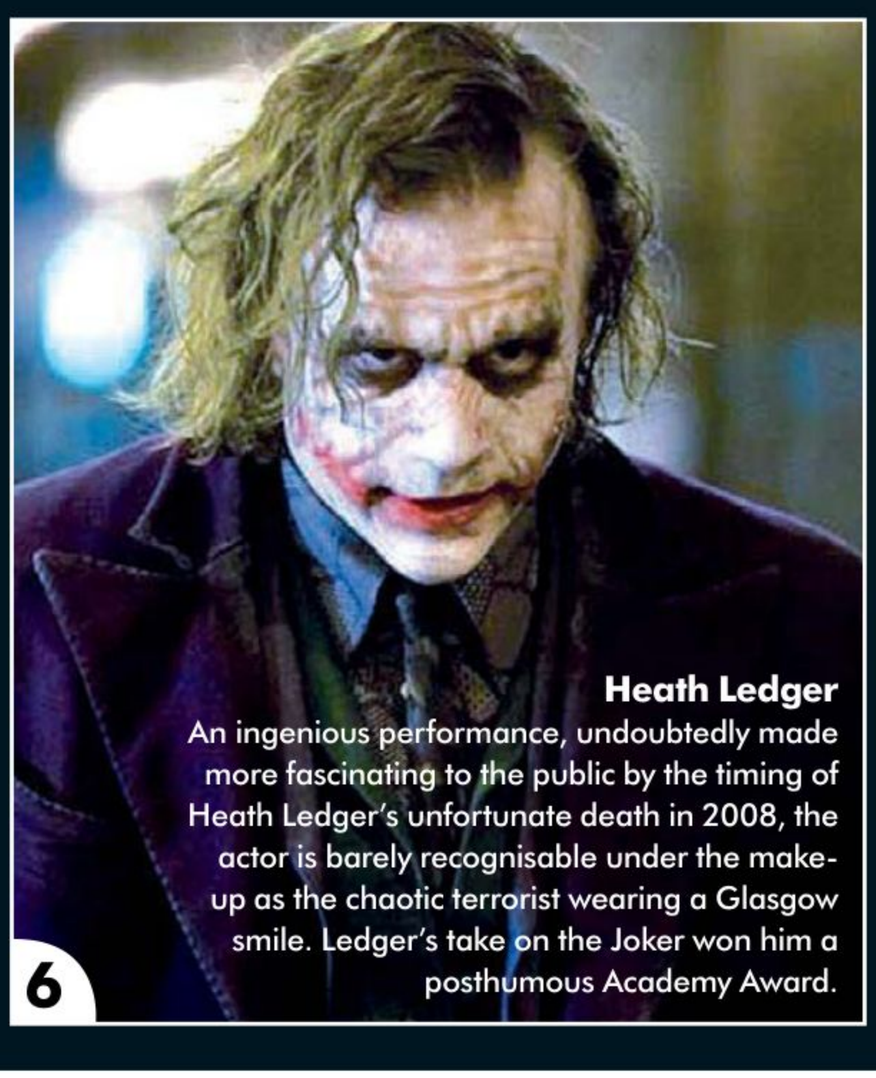
Batman issue 1
The Joker is portrayed as a disturbing and creepy figure, even by Golden Age comics standards. His outfit and modus operandi – including his trademark of leaving a grin on the corpses of his victims – is all here.

Jared Leto
The acclaimed actor is the latest to take on the role.

4

5

The Killing Joke
The Joker's 'origins' revealed – or are they? Brian Bolland pencilled the definitive modern day Joker, while Alan Moore highlighted the similarities between the Dark Knight and his pervading adversary.



Heath Ledger
An ingenious performance, undoubtedly made more fascinating to the public by the timing of Heath Ledger's unfortunate death in 2008, the actor is barely recognisable under the make-up as the chaotic terrorist wearing a Glasgow smile. Ledger's take on the Joker won him a posthumous Academy Award.

6

Mark Hamill
Hamill's work as the Joker in *The Animated Series* defined the actor's post-*Star Wars* career, attracting a positive reception for his near-perfect balance between the character's clown-like ridiculousness and his serial killer tendencies. Hamill reprised the role in the film *Mask Of The Phantasm* and the *Arkham* game series.

7

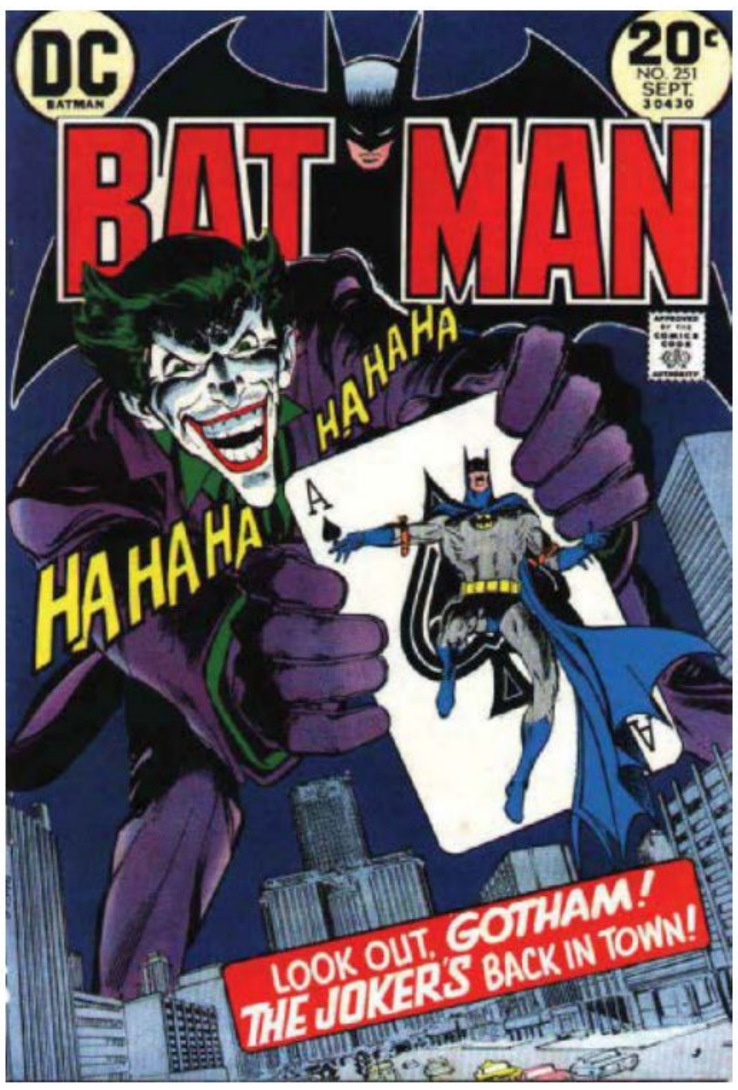
the pro-censorship nonsense of *Seduction Of The Innocent* by Fredric Wertham.

Then came the Sixties *Batman* TV series, starring Adam West, which introduced the Clown Prince to a much wider audience. This quickly became a pop culture sensation, and the campy portrayal of the character by Cesar Romero – who refused to have his moustache shaved off, prompting the show's make-up artists to simply paint over it – would be the most widely recognised image of the Joker among the public until Tim Burton's 1989 *Batman* movie.

In the early Seventies, Batman returned to his darker beginning, and his enemies followed suit. As is the way in comic-books, the Joker as we know him now has very little to do with his original creators. Instead, his reinvention came in the Eighties, along with Batman himself. As Batman evolved into a very grim character after Frank Miller's legendary future-set tale *The Dark Knight Returns*, so too did the Joker. There were two other stories that rewrote the rules of the character during the Eighties: Alan Moore and Brian Bolland's *The Killing Joke*, which depicted an origin story of the villain, and 1988's *A Death In The Family*, in which he beats the second character to death with a crowbar.

It's no coincidence that the Joker was at the centre of two of the darkest modern Batman tales – of all the contemporary iterations of Batman villains, who are depicted as victims and designed to reflect the Dark Knight's fractured psyche, the Joker is the most unambiguously terrible foe.

"WHAT IS TERRIFYING ABOUT THE JOKER IS HIS LACK OF MOTIVATION OTHER THAN TO CAUSE CHAOS FOR CHAOS' SAKE"



In the end, the Joker always comes back to haunt Batman.

In *The Killing Joke*, the Joker goes on a rampage, shooting Batgirl Barbara Gordon in the spine and paralysing her, while humiliating Jim Gordon in the ultimate taunt towards his enemy. The story recounts Joker's beginnings as a tragic and failed comedian who took an ill-fated tumble into a vat of chemicals, only to re-emerge insane and fully formed as the villain. Even in the midst of telling the story, however, the Joker casts doubt on how true it all is, which has subsequently become a cornerstone of the character's construction, later filtering down into Nolan's *The Dark Knight*.

More and more, it has become clear that the Joker's origins don't matter – the point of the Clown Prince of Crime was that he existed because Batman did. *The Dark Knight Returns* illustrates them as two sides of the same coin, that they both always co-exist, with the Joker depicted as an utterly inactive asylum inmate until Batman's return is declared; they're strangely symbiotic.

In *The Dark Knight*, we saw that multiple choice origin story purported in Heath Ledger's remarkable portrayal of the villain, which posited the theories that his scars were caused by either his insane wife or his abusive father – ultimately, it doesn't matter either way. What is terrifying about the Joker is his lack of motivation other than to cause chaos for chaos' sake; more so than any other villain, he asks the chicken-or-the-egg question about comic-book heroes and villains, whether there would be a Joker if there weren't a Batman. Few superhero and villain pairings deserve that level of analysis, but the Joker definitely does, so wide-reaching is his permeation of popular culture.

Jack Nicholson's take on the Joker played up that symbiosis even further, tweaking Batman's origin story so that it was he who killed Bruce's parents down Crime Alley. What's wonderful about Nicholson's performance is that we're not sure where the line is drawn between the character and Nicholson's interpretation – is this really the Joker, or is this something original and bizarre, that only owes the barest bones to the comic-book source material? It's difficult to tell, and Ledger does this in his own entirely different way, too.

The Joker is as compelling a villain as Batman is a hero. While so many comic-book antagonists begin and end with the novelty they're based on – Bane being a prominent example of the creative depths that Batman continuity has plummeted to at times – the Joker remains a fantastic fictional enemy; one whose actions we can never predict as readers, and one that will no doubt be interpreted in many more fascinating ways in future.

The Dark Knight Triple Play is out now, priced at £8.75. *The Killing Joke* and lots of other classic Joker stories are available digitally from Comixology.

38

SPIDER-MAN

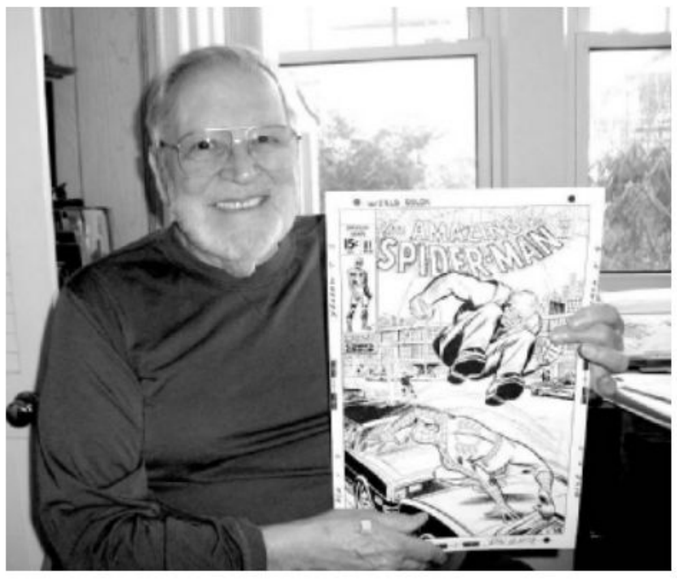
The geek, turned superhero, Peter Parker, took teenage angst to a whole new level after being bitten by a spider; adopting the, not-so-original, alias, Spider-Man

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ CO-CREATED BY Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, Spidey didn't need a blockbuster movie – or four – to propel him into the mainstream. Brought to the big screen by the aforementioned Tobey Maguire and, more recently, by Andy Garfield in *The Amazing Spider-Man*, unlike many superheroes, the Web-slinger needn't rely on his on-screen incarnation when his comic-book counterpart's so renowned. Spider-Man characterises the lay-man becoming a superhero. He's clumsy, self-conscious and far from perfect in the beginning, making him appealing to kids, and grown-ups, alike. Despite the ill-fitting costume and somewhat suffocating mask, most of us have wanted to be Spider-Man at some stage. Living at home and getting shoved into lockers never looked so appealing.

The Man Who Raised SPIDER-MAN

An artist that defined Spider-Man for an entire generation, **John Romita** helped forge the Marvel style throughout the Silver Age. We talk to the legendary artist about his career and what might have been...



Romita is known for his work on *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

For comic-book fans interested in the road not travelled, here's an interesting alternative universe to ponder. In the mid-Sixties, just a couple of weeks after shaking hands with Stan Lee on a deal to leave DC for a job at Marvel, artist John Romita got a call from DC editor George Kashdan asking him to take over *Metamorpho*, a second-tier book. While the offer was certainly tempting, and could have meant significantly more money in his pocket, Romita decided to honour his agreement with Lee and move to Marvel.

"I've had three or four of those forks in the road," claims Romita, whose short stints on *Daredevil* and *Captain America* were followed by an extended gig on *The Amazing Spider-Man*. "That fork was intriguing, and I always wonder what would have happened if I had done it. Since *Metamorpho* was a second-line hero, it didn't tease me that much, but I also felt the obligation to be fair to Stan and not go back on my handshake."

If that story isn't enough to make long-time readers wonder about what might have been, Romita has an even better one to tell. "When Jack Kirby left Marvel in 1971," he relates, "he called me two days after he left and asked me to join him. He told me he wanted to do less artwork and more writing, and I know he called three or four guys either before or after me and said the same thing. He really wanted to do this line of books, and he had so many ideas that he just didn't have time to do all of them. Jack was juggling ten different brilliant ideas at the same time, so I will always be haunted by the fact that I don't know what would have happened if I had gone with Jack. Who knows? I might have made the Fourth World more durable!"

While the thought of a *New Gods* or *Forever People* written by Jack Kirby and drawn by John Romita is interesting to contemplate, it wasn't to be. "My wife said, 'You're going to be a Kirby clone!'," notes the artist, "so I never gave it any more thought. I also figured it was a gamble, because if I went over there with Jack, I don't think I would have been working with Jack; I would have been working with Carmine Infantino, the president of DC. It was the same thing when Stan went to California and asked me to move out there. I didn't want to be in a situation where if Stan decided to come ⇨

back to New York, I'd be stuck out in California!"

IT MAY BE FUN TO DISCUSS THESE VARIOUS ROADS NOT TAKEN, BUT THERE'S NO DISPUTING THE FACT THAT 'JAZZY' JOHN ROMITA REMAINS ONE OF THE SMALL GROUP OF TALENTED CREATORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SO-CALLED 'MARVEL AGE OF COMICS'

in the Sixties and Seventies. During his official – and unofficial – tenure as art director, he was responsible for Marvel's house style; drawing covers, designing characters and creating a wide range of promotional artwork for everything from restaurants to record sleeves. He also collaborated with writer Stan Lee on the syndicated *Spider-Man* newspaper strip for nearly half a decade.

Romita's work on the regular *Amazing Spider-Man* book is about to get even closer scrutiny thanks to John Romita's *The Amazing Spider-Man: Artist's Edition*, released by IDW. The 144 black and white pages are scanned from the original artwork, showing every blue pencil mark, paste-over and white-out correction just as they appeared more than four decades ago. "I think they want the pages to look just the way they did, fingerprints and all; some guys even spilled coffee on their pages! I think one of the reasons they decided to do this book was because there won't be any original art in the future; it's all done on machinery."

And the artist's reaction at seeing some of that artwork again after so many years? "Actually, I've seen a lot of those pages again, because [original art collector] Mike Burkey has most of them, and sometimes he brings them over to show me or have them signed and things like that, so I've seen some of the pages down the years."

Ironically, modern-day moviegoers may have seen some of Romita's most famous Spider-Man panels without realising it thanks to the films, which reproduced them on the big screen. "I remember seeing the sequence in *Spider-Man 2* with Peter Parker giving up the costume; we were at a screening with Marvel, and Peter David yelled out 'Romita rules!' We got a big charge out of that."

It's also a bit ironic that Romita is so closely associated with Spider-Man when he wasn't all that interested in the wall-crawler in the first place. When Steve Ditko abruptly left the book after issue #38, Lee needed somebody to step in. He turned to Romita, who was happily pencilling *Daredevil*, but was willing to help out on a temporary basis. "I actually tried to ghost Steve Ditko for the first few issues," he remembers. "It was a tradition in the industry; if you ghosted a successful comic, you were obliged to do that. I was doing a thin pen line that I didn't like to do, and did nine or ten panels on a page; all the things that Ditko had built on *Spider-Man*. I didn't even discuss it with Stan, and he didn't even ask me to do it.

"The thing is, I thought I was succeeding, but people said, 'Oh no, I saw your style right away!' If you look at Spider-Man when he appeared in *Daredevil*, he didn't look the way he did when I did the regular *Spider-Man* book. I was actually trying to imitate his style, and I got as close as I thought I could get, but I don't think it ever worked.

"I'll tell you what the problem was; I didn't think I was going to be on the book for long. I thought I was on it temporarily. It was the same reason that when I was on *Fantastic Four* for three or four issues, I was very glad when John Buscema took over, because I felt like a fish out of water. When I did *Daredevil*, I had this broad brush technique that I loved, and was having fun with it, but *Spider-Man* was a chore. It was no walk in the park to simulate Steve Ditko."

All the comics mentioned here are available digitally from the Marvel Unlimited app.

FORTUNATELY, IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE ROMITA BEGAN TO MAKE SPIDER-MAN HIS OWN, AND SALES OF MARVEL'S FLAGSHIP TITLE CONTINUED TO GROW (EVEN OUTSELLING THE FANTASTIC FOUR) DURING HIS TENURE. NOT ONLY did his depiction of the web-slinger become the iconic version, but the artist proved equally versatile. He could also turn Stan Lee's often sparse plots into dynamic stories, to the point where Lee would drop off notes on his desk saying, 'Next issue, The Rhino!' leaving Romita to put it together. "It was a compliment, but at the time it was oppression," he remembers.

"When I got off the *Spider-Man* newspaper strip years later, Stan gave the Sunday strip to a guy in California that did Spider-Man in a very strange way. His name was Floro Dery, who was a good artist, but he didn't do Spider-Man the way we were used to seeing him. I called Stan from New York and said, 'Stan, what's with this guy? Why are you accepting those Sunday pages?'

"He said, 'I could tell Floro Dery that I want him to do it like you, but he wouldn't be able to do it, but I know when I ask you to do something, you can do it!' He used to make me go crazy doing corrections and making things perfect, only because he knew I could do it, but when he worked with a guy who didn't do corrections or didn't have a way of doing it better, he just wouldn't ask him! I said, 'So you're telling me that you punished me because I was better than the other guy?' and he said yes. That's why I was glad to not be stuck as an inker; I would have got stuck with all the bad pencils!"

Romita wrapped up his initial run on *Spider-Man* in 1971, when Lee pulled him off at the last minute to work on another project. Sadly, it meant he missed out on one of the book's most important runs, including the 'drug issues,' the six-armed Spidey, the death of Captain Stacy, Morbius and of course, the landmark 100th issue. "I didn't know they were going to be landmark issues at the time," he admits. "The other irony is that I plotted those stories with Stan, but somebody else pencilled them!

"I used to have to give guys like Gil Kane and John Buscema the plot over the phone. Stan and I would plot them and then I would give them the plot over the phone, so there was an awful lot of my input in-between. I didn't realise those issues were going to be so important."

"STAN LEE USED TO MAKE ME GO CRAZY DOING CORRECTIONS AND MAKING THINGS PERFECT"

Romita's job as the company's de facto art director often precluded him from an extended run on any book. Those responsibilities included working with freelancers, overseeing cover designs and sometimes having to make changes to someone else's art. As a former freelancer, the latter was a job he always hated. "I got a reputation for having a big ego, but I would rather kill myself than have to change some of that stuff. These guys were my idols.

"I had to call up John Buscema one day and tell him he wasn't doing his breakdowns tight enough for the Filipino artists. Here I am, talking to John Buscema, and I idolised everything he did, and I'm telling him that he's doing something wrong, so it was not easy to do."

Part of the job involved designing characters for other books. "Stan started treating me like the house artist", he remembers. "If he needed a cover done, he would ask me to put down Spider-Man even if I was late, just to do a cover. I did a lot of cover sketches for people, and I wasn't getting paid for most of them.

"An editor would come in while I was drawing or doing a *Spider-Man* cover, and they would ask me if I could come up with a costume for Wolverine, so I would go to the encyclopaedia and look up what a wolverine was, and I would end up doing the costume design."

Although Romita has taken a step back from regular comic-book work, his son, John Romita Jr, has established himself as one of the industry's biggest talents. It wasn't a job his dad encouraged. "First of all, I thought every year would be the last year for comics. Gil Kane and I constantly talked about getting a studio together and working in advertising, because we were all planning for comics to go under, so I told John I didn't think there was a future in comics.

"I also said, 'You've seen me fall asleep at the drawing board; why would you want to be in a business where you're sometimes working seven days a week?' but he would not be deterred. He's now the best storyteller in the business. He not only does things I never could have done; he also does things nobody else can do. There's no way I could have produced *Kick-Ass* the way that he does it. He created a whole world there."

Pressed about his own legacy, John Romita remains pragmatic. "A lot of people," he reflects, "like whenever I meet one of the old Romita's Raiders [young artists he mentored], have told me I gave them a way to behave and a way to work, which is very gratifying. So what can I say? I didn't know I was doing anything spectacular. I was just trying to earn a living!"

THE SOUL OF SPIDER-MAN

Romita's most memorable Web-slinging

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #39
Romita's first issue after co-creator Steve Ditko left the book, the artist immediately established himself as a worthy successor to this title, with the villainous Green Goblin's identity being ultimately revealed as none other than the father of Peter Parker's friend Harry, Norman Osborn.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #42
Marking the first visual appearance of Mary Jane Watson, with the legendary line "Face it tiger... you just hit the jackpot!", Romita had already left a permanent mark on the Web-slinger within three issues.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #57
This was the last of Romita's 18 issue original run on *The Amazing Spider-Man*, and the quality of his art at this point showcased how much his work had evolved since he first got the unenviable job of following up Ditko.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #121
Not pencilled by Romita, the artist instead provided the provocative 'Who dies?' theme cover to this landmark issue, which saw the death of long-time love for Peter Parker, Gwen Stacy.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #500
Romita teamed up with his son, the extremely talented Romita Jr, to tell one half of a moving anniversary tale for the Web-slinger, written by J Michael Straczynski, which saw Peter Parker reflecting on his career.

39

IRON MAN

Encased in the suit, Iron Man's intelligent, strong, speedy and shiny. Take off the suit and what is he? Genious, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist – that's who

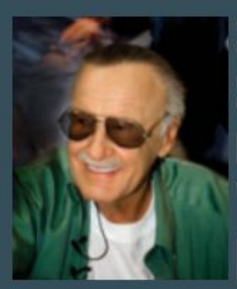
SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ MAYBE WE shouldn't praise the often arrogant, consistantly rich, and forever smart-ass, but when Tony Stark dons his suit, who wouldn't want to be Iron Man? With intelligence to rival Stephen Hawking, wit that snaps like a whip, and an effortless swag that immediately surrounds any room he enters, Stark's a man we should love to hate, but instead hate to admit we love. Brilliantly brought to life by Robert Downy Jr in three self-titled movies, as well as *Avengers Assemble* – with a second team-up on the way – it's difficult to imagine the suited, sarcastic stud any other way. His knack for saving the day helps justify our envy, but it probably has more to do with his house, cars, gadgets and, of course, the suits.

40

STAN LEE

The father of Marvel is responsible for expanding the small scale publishers into a multimedia corporation. Without him, too much of this list wouldn't exist.



SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★½
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
CRITICAL ACCLAIM: ★★★★★
WRITING SKILLS: ★★★★½
PRODUCTION SKILLS: ★★★★★

■ HEARD OF Spider-Man? How about the Hulk? X-Men? Iron Man? Thor? Daredevil? Of course you have, thanks to this 90-year-old comic book writer, publisher, editor, producer, actor and former president and chairman of Marvel Comics. Stan Lee's the Hugh Hefner of sci-fi and comic books; with numerous awards under his superhero studded belt, he was inducted onto The Will Eisner Awards Hall of Fame in 1994 and the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame in 1995. He's largely responsible for the multimedia and multinational expansion of the, now legendary, Marvel Comics; his characters starring in TV shows, films, videogames and even apps. Additionally, his love of cameo appearances makes for an enjoyable ongoing game of 'Where's Stan?'

STAN LEE SPEAKS

SHOWMAN AND CREATOR, STAN LEE PRESIDED OVER THE BIRTH OF MARVEL COMICS AND SOME OF ITS MIGHTIEST HEROES, FROM IRON MAN AND THE X-MEN TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND SPIDER-MAN. WE GET AN INCREDIBLE, WORLD-EXCLUSIVE CHANCE TO TALK TO THE COMIC-BOOK LEGEND ABOUT THAT INCREDIBLE DECADE WHEN THE MODERN SUPERHERO WAS BORN...

It's difficult to describe just how great an impact Stan Lee has had on the comics industry over the decades, since he first started at Timely Comics back in 1939, not long before his 17th birthday. Timely went on to become the mighty Marvel Comics, with Lee co-creating many of the greatest characters of the Sixties, from Spider-Man to Iron Man, the Fantastic Four to the X-Men, and every jolly green giant and red devil in between. Put simply, if comics are your universe, then Stan Lee is your God.

Talking with God then is perhaps a tad daunting. Thankfully, answering questions is something Lee has had plenty of practice with over the last 70 years. "As long as they're not difficult," he laughs. "I'm not good at difficult questions!"

The Silver Age of comics is widely regarded as the medium's finest hour, beginning in the late Fifties and lasting until the end of the Sixties. Since the end of the Second World War, superheroes had lost their mojo, as well as their fans, until DC hit on the bright idea of relaunching their superheroes with less myth and more science. Out went Green Lantern's Aladdin-style magic lamp, and in came a new, sleek Justice League of America. After years of romance comics, western comics and horror, the fans went wild for the new and improved caped crusaders. Lee's publisher was quick off the mark, assigning the writer the challenge of coming up with an all-new superhero team. The result perhaps explains the other name for this era of comics publishing: The Marvel Age.

"That was the name I gave it years ago," Lee explains enthusiastically. "I wanted to make it sound like the age of knights in armour, and I figured the 'Marvel Age of comics.' It was a very dramatic phrase, and I'm glad that people still refer to it and use it."

The first issue of *The Fantastic Four* hit the shelves in 1961, introducing four superheroes that were unlike anything readers had seen before. Lee, along with top artist and co-plotter Jack Kirby, had created heroes that didn't hide their identities from the public, and interacted with each other in their personal lives. In short, they had created heroes like real people.

"They were real in my imagination anyway!" Lee grins. "Until there was the Fantastic Four, I always felt most superheroes didn't have personal lives, or if they did the reader never knew 'cause nobody wrote about it. In other words, what did Superman do when he wasn't being Superman? Well, he was a reporter, but where did he live? And how did he spend his days? I knew nothing about him, and the same with all the superheroes. They were only interesting when they wore their costume and were fighting the bad guys, so I thought it would be fun if they could also be interesting in their normal identity."

> **"UNTIL THE FANTASTIC FOUR, MOST SUPERHEROES DIDN'T HAVE PERSONAL LIVES"**
> STAN LEE

The Fantastic Four – Mr Fantastic, the Invisible Girl (later Woman), the Human Torch, and The Thing – lived together, quarrelled together, faced the press together, and protected the public from a rotating cast of particularly vexing villains. For a readership that was used to the stoic adventures of the wholesome Superman and rich playboy Batman, the personal dramas of these new heroes provided an addictive combination of superheroics and soap opera drama.

"I thought it would be fun to have them as real people," Lee continues. "Instead of a girl who didn't know that the superhero was really her boyfriend, Sue Storm, the Invisible Girl, not only knew that Reed Richards was Mr Fantastic, but she was engaged to him. And not only that, she was a member of the team – she was a heroine too. And the Human Torch, instead of him just being a sidekick, I tried to make him a real guy. He literally preferred driving the sports car or going out with girls to fighting bad guys. 'Cause I felt if I were a teenager, fighting the villain would be OK, but I'd rather be on a date!

"I just tried to make the characters as realistic as I could, and then for fun I thought the leader of the group, Reed Richards – or Mr Fantastic as he modestly called himself – I felt that it would be fun to make him sort of boring, because he talks too much and he uses a lot of big words, and the others, especially The Thing, they could always joke about that and tell him to shut up, and say, 'Why can't he use one word instead of 20?' and so forth. I tried to give them all their own personality and their own place in the world, where you knew who they were when they weren't being superheroes."

Lee is not only the most famous name in the comics industry; 'Smiling Stan', as he would often sign off, remains one of the friendliest comic writers in the business, and hectic schedule permitting, is always happy to recount his memories with great affection. The creator is equally at ease with the number of cinematic and television adaptations of

his characters and stories, and happy to see his work reach the largest audience possible.

One character in particular, created in 1962 with Steve Ditko (later the creator and co-creator of *The Question* and *Hawk And Dove*) became one of the most popular heroes of all time. Just three years after he first hit the stands, he was voted as a favourite revolutionary icon by college students alongside Che Guevera and Bob Dylan in a poll by the iconic *Esquire* magazine. That man, of course, was Spider-Man.

"When I used to write these stories, I never thought in terms of, 'This book is for older readers,' or 'This book is for younger readers.' I just thought to myself, 'I'm gonna write the kind of stories that I would enjoy reading, and I hope there are enough people like me so they'll enjoy them too!'

"I tried to make the stories exciting and easy enough to understand so that younger readers would like them, and I tried to make them with enough personality and a good enough vocabulary so that older readers would also enjoy them. But as I said previously, basically I was really just trying to write stories that I myself would like to read."

While Spider-Man has consistently enjoyed top billing throughout the decades, from page to screen and even to musical, other Marvel characters have experienced a real resurgence in popularity due to their recent, high-profile cinematic adventures. Most notable of these is Iron Man, with films in 2008, 2010 and 2013, and top spot in *Avengers Assemble*. But if you thought that his sizeable female fanbase was entirely down to the work of Robert Downey Jr alone, then think again!

"Well, it's a funny thing about Iron Man, you know. We got a lot of fanmail at Marvel in those days when I was there, and believe it or not Iron Man received more mail from girls than any other of our characters. And I think it was because to a girl such as yourself," Lee pauses, and the twinkle in his eyes is practically audible, "Iron Man – he was handsome, he was wealthy, he was glamorous, but he had a problem with his heart, and there was something very dramatic about that. And I think the average woman would say, 'He's such a wonderful guy, I could look after him, I could take care of him and make sure that he'll be alright.' I think it brought out the nurse in women, too, the feeling that they could take care of this wonderful person and give him a full life."

"JACK KIRBY AND STEVE DITKO WERE WRITERS THEMSELVES, EXCEPT THEY WROTE WITH DRAWINGS" STAN LEE

While Tony Stark's heart condition was ultimately cured in later comics, there is something endearingly fragile about those early strips; Stark's last-minute attempts to recharge his life-supporting breastplate proved to be as nerve-wracking to read as his balls-to-the-wall battles with communist saboteurs.

Iron Man's proven box office appeal, with three hit films to his name, saw the character dominate much of the publicity for *Avengers Assemble*, becoming yet another blockbuster that can thank Stan Lee for its existence. True believers will have more than likely spotted Stan making a cameo appearance in most Marvel films to date, and Joss Whedon's 2012 contribution was no exception.

Only two years after Lee rejuvenated the superhero genre with *The Fantastic Four*, he and Kirby unleashed another team book that would go on to be one of the most commercially successful creations within the comics industry. With over ten ongoing titles currently in publication, not to mention several first-class films, behold the mighty X-Men.

Once more, innovation was the key to success, although Lee is quick to explain that characterisation always came before plot.

"One interesting thing about it," Lee ponders, "is that I had already done Spider-Man, who was bitten by a radioactive spider, and the Hulk, who became the Hulk because of gamma rays, and the Fantastic Four got their power because of cosmic rays, and I said to myself, instead of having to figure out some pseudo-scientific reason for how they got their power, I would take the easy way out, the cowardly way, and just say they were born that way!"

While later writers would fill in those blanks, the core idea was held – isolation due to prejudice. Held up as heroes among minority communities, the X-Men continued Lee's trend of having his characters tackle the social issues of the day.

"I was trying to make it a series that was mainly just a good, exciting adventure series, but I wanted to also show how unfair bigotry is, to dislike people or hate people just because they're different. That was really the underlying moral thought behind the story. The

The Avengers brought together some of Marvel's biggest characters for the first time.

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Stan Lee at 2011's Phoenix Comic Con in Arizona.

© Gage Skidmore

THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR

Stan Lee on Daredevil and overlooked co-creator Bill Everett

Daredevil is one of the best comic creations of all time; not only did the stories blend superheroics with a more gritty noir tone, but the hero himself had a rather unique aspect.

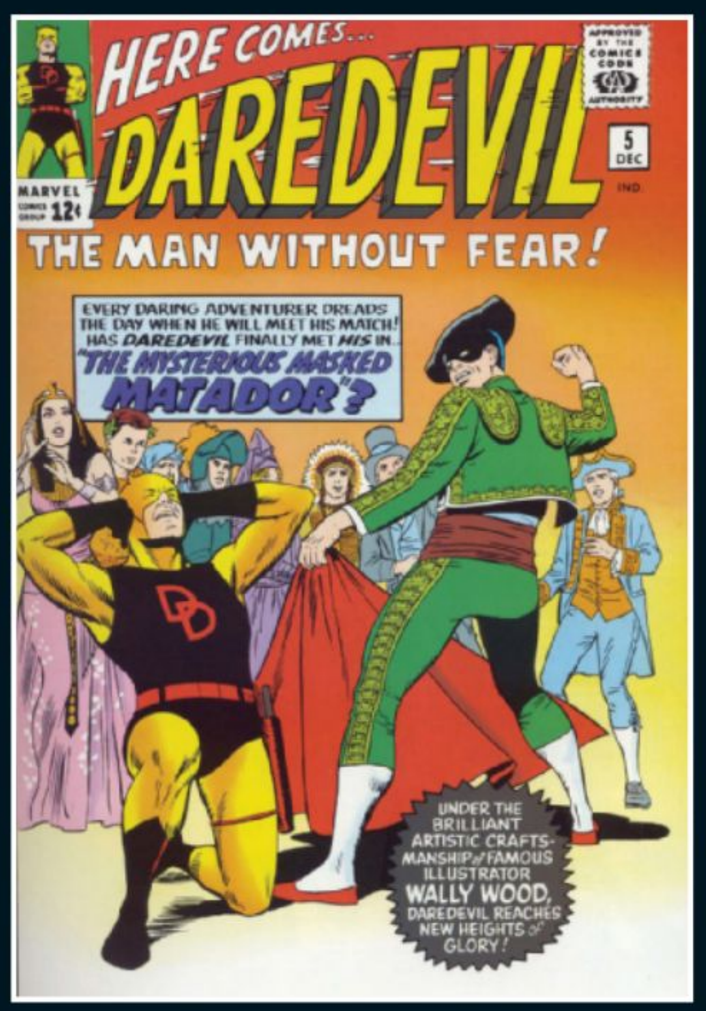
Sure, swinging around the rooftops of New York with his heightened radar sense made Matt Murdoch a little similar to a certain friendly neighbourhood web-slinger, and perhaps his smitten secretary and clumsy pal recalled a particular iron-clad millionaire, but one thing that truly set Daredevil aside from his predecessors was his background. Murdoch was a blue-collar kid, growing up in Hell's Kitchen, pulling himself out of the gutter to bring justice to his own impoverished streets. Among the middle class heroes and millionaire playboys, the blind Daredevil didn't just break down stereotypes about people with disabilities; he and Stan Lee crashed through our class prejudices and brought many readers a hero they could really identify with.

"Daredevil's one of my favourites!" Lee exclaims excitedly. "I wanted to get someone who's basically a person with disabilities, and show that he could be a superhero, and you're right, he didn't start off wealthy, he's just a lawyer, and I gave him a partner named Foggy, just for a little comedy relief, and also so that Daredevil would have someone to talk to. I thought it was fun having a character who's blind and yet could do things that even a sighted man can't do."

Unlike the other artists Lee worked with, from Jack Kirby, who contributed to books on nearly every title, to Steve Ditko, who designed Spider-Man, the artist who co-created Daredevil, Bill Everett, is perhaps lesser known today. While Kirby drew up the original concept sketches of Daredevil, as well as creating his famous billy club weapon, Lee explained just why he was so excited to work with Everett.

"Bill Everett was the fellow who years ago, before I even came to work for the company, drew a character called the Sub-Mariner. Another fellow named Carl Burgos created the Human Torch. He wasn't the same as *The Fantastic Four*'s Human Torch; he was an android who could burst into flame and fly. The company, and I say this is even before I came to work there, were called Timely Comics. Timely published a number of books in which the Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner would fight each other. They were always enemies, and the stories were wonderful.

"When I wanted to create some new characters, luckily Bill Everett was still around. I called him and asked if he would do *Daredevil*, and he did the first issue. He may have even done the second, I don't remember, but he got the strip off to a wonderful start, and then different artists did it – I think Gene Colan did a lot of the strips – but that was Bill Everett. I don't know why he left the strip, apparently he had other things he wanted to do, but we were always good friends. He was a very, very talented artist and writer."



main thing I had in mind, I just wanted to show some teenagers who had superpowers and the world didn't understand them. Some people dislike anyone who's different or who they don't understand."

With all these popular titles being introduced within the span of only three years, Stan Lee quickly became one of the most prolific comic writers the industry had ever seen. The sheer number of books being produced was made possible by a new form of comics collaboration that Lee introduced with his primary artists, Kirby and Ditko, known as the Marvel Method.

"The Marvel Method came about out of necessity," Lee explains. "I was writing all of these books – it took a lot of time, and there were different artists for every book. Say Jack Kirby was drawing The *Fantastic Four* and Steve Ditko was doing *Spider-Man* or *Doctor Strange*, and *Iron Man* was being done by Don Heck, and Bill Everett had done the first *Daredevil*. What happened was these artists were freelancers; that is, they didn't get paid unless they brought in some artwork. They weren't on salary. So if a freelancer had nothing to do, he wasn't getting paid.

"Say Jack Kirby had just finished *The Fantastic Four*, and he'd brought it to my office, and now he wanted the next script so that he could work on it and get paid for that. But I hadn't had time to write the script, because I was still finishing the *Spider-Man* script. But I couldn't let Jack just stand around for a few days doing nothing while I finished the script, so I said, 'Look Jack, I don't have a script for you, but here is the idea that I want for the next story," and I gave him – I spoke to him, I didn't write anything – I said, 'This is what I'd like the story to be. Let Doctor Doom be the villain, and he tries to kidnap Sue Storm, but Reed Richards…' I gave him whatever I could in a few minutes. I generally told him the story, and I said, "Now you go ahead home and you draw it any way you want to, as long as you generally follow the storyline I told you. When you have it drawn, bring it back to me, and I'll put the dialogue and the caption balloons in.'

"And in that way, I was able to keep a number of writers busy all at the same time, because while I was writing a script for one, I would tell the story to the other one, and they could all be working, and that became known as the Marvel Method, and after a while I realised, I thought the stories turned out

better that way than if I wrote a script because when you write a script first, you have nothing that you're looking at; it's all in your imagination. But when the artist brings in the artwork, you see it, and then when you write the dialogue you can match the dialogue perfectly to the drawing. And somehow or other I felt that made for a better story, and after a while a lot of the writers used that same system, and as I say," Lee pauses for his comical dramatic effect, "that's what the famous Marvel Method was."

The method, while successful at the time, has led to many disputes in later years as artists realised that they were contributing more than they were perhaps being recognised for. While Lee originally stuck to his belief that it is the writer who is the creator, while the artist simply visualises the writer's ideas, he is now happy to share co-creator credits, and stresses the importance of their role in the collaborative process.

"I was lucky because all of these artists had very good story senses, and once they knew what the idea was, they could draw it so that it was an interesting version of the story. Every one of them, they were writers themselves, except they wrote with drawings, if you know what I mean. But we all thought alike and understood each other, and it worked out very well."

Lee continued to write on a large number of titles, and in the Eighties began developing television and film adaptations, acting as executive producer on just about every Marvel superhero screen outing you can think of, from the long running *X-Men* animated series to *Blade* and *Iron Man 3*. Not forgetting of course, expanding Marvel's interests to encompass the likes of *Biker Mice From Mars*.

"I FELT IF I WERE A TEENAGER, FIGHTING THE VILLAIN WOULD BE OKAY, BUT I'D MUCH RATHER BE OUT ON A DATE!" STAN LEE

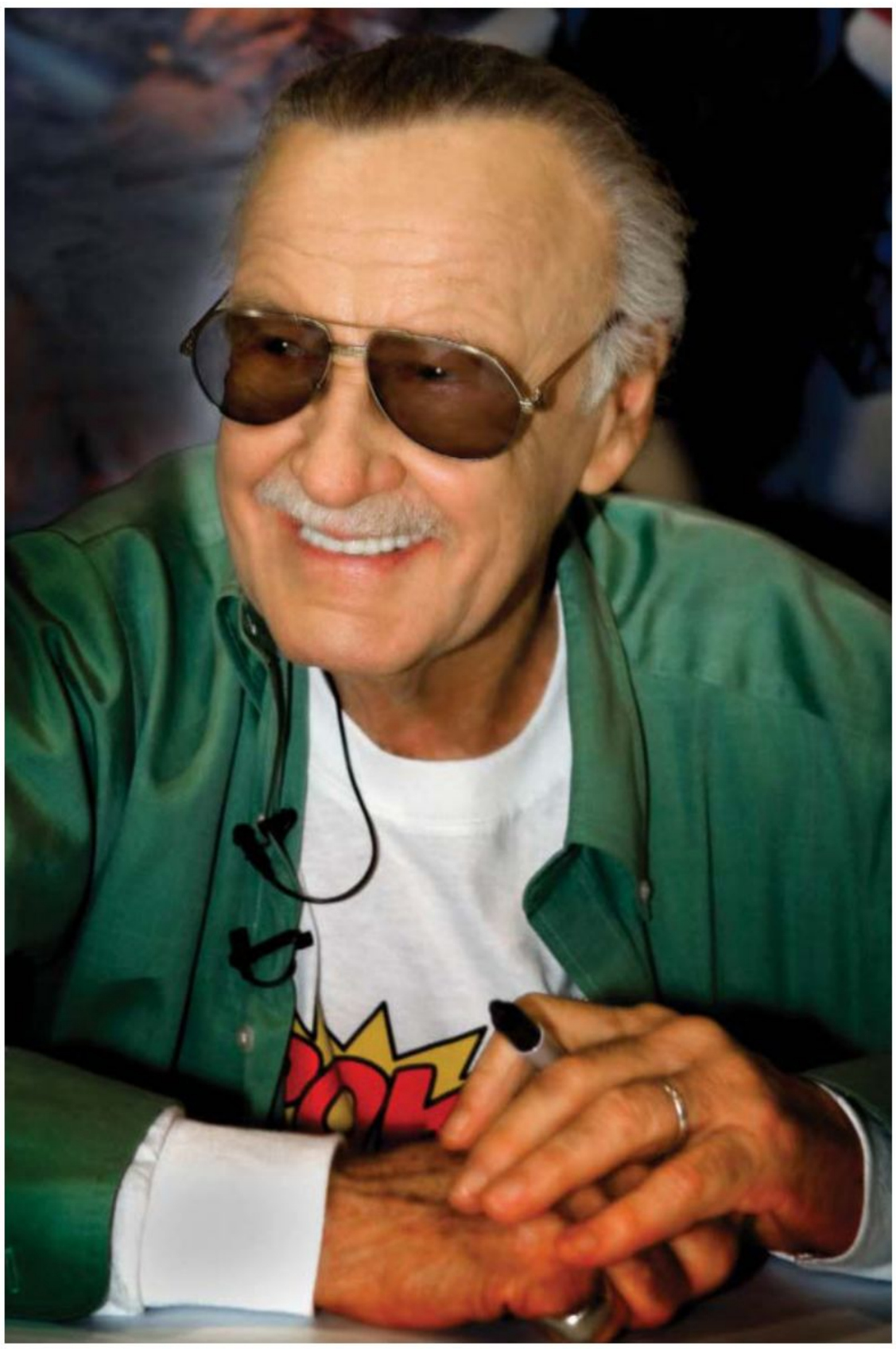
In the past decade, Lee has kept himself busy by creating content for POW! Entertainment, an American media production company of which he is a founding member, and it seems that the living legend is working as hard as ever.

"I don't know if you've seen one of my television series, it's called *Stan Lee's Superhumans*?" Lee asks earnestly regarding one of his recent shows, starring various wannabe crusaders. "It's a cute show; it's about people, real people, who have what seem to be superpowers. It's been quite successful.

"We have a motion picture that's being developed. It's being written now about a superhero and his wife, and… something happens to them – I'm sorry that I'm not allowed to really give these stories away, but the movie company would kill me!"

The writer is as enthusiastic as ever about his projects, and is famously happy to talk to his fans. "Call me Stan!" is perhaps as much a catchphrase for Lee now as "Excelsior!" was, and Stan has a whole stack of upcoming titles this year. "I'm doing some new comic-books," Lee says. "I've created a Chinese

Though the X-Men have changed dramatically, their core premise remains faithful to Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's intent.



With *The Fantastic Four* Stan Lee and Jack Kirby set the template for the modern dysfunctional superteam.

superhero, which will be big in China, and I'm trying to write him so that he'll be popular all over the world, and we're doing another superhero for India.

"We have a new book coming out called *Romeo And Juliet: The War*. We've taken the story of *Romeo And Juliet*, and we've put it a few hundred years into the future. It's still the same love story, but it's also an exciting adventure story."

With a new line of children's comics in the pipeline (Stan Lee's Kids Universe), a new legion of fans from his oft-repeated cameo in *The Big Bang Theory*, and his position as Marvel's Chairman Emeritus, there's no sign that the 90 year-old will slow down any time soon "We keep busy with a lot of things, I love to be busy!" As the Man himself would say, "Nuff said!"

Sixties Stan Lee titles, including *The Amazing Spider-Man, Fantastic Four, The Avengers* and *X-Men*, can be purchased digitally from Comixology from as little as $1.99 each (approx £1.30) or found on Marvel Unlimited for $9.99 a month (approx £6.50).

Captain America's resurrection in *The Avengers* returned the character to the public consciousness.

41 WOLVERINE

The cynical, clawed X-Man, with his prolonged life span and mutant healing, has extra time to drink and dwell on his troubled past and tragic love life

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ THE SARDONIC, anti-hero attitude Wolverine, or James Howlett/Weapon X/Logan, carries is possibly the reason we rate him so highly. The rebellious outsider's more relatable – and often more amusing – than many of his Marvel counterparts. Wolverine's enhanced physical and healing abilities make him burly, but not unbeatable, and his alloy-clad skeleton and claws let him punch well above his weight - as his freqent set-tos with the Hulk testify. One of the only constants throughout the X-Men franchise, including movies, TV shows, and videogames, as well as the only one with self-titled films, games and an animated series, Wolverine is the breakout start of mutantkind. Most famously portrayed by Hugh Jackman, he's partly to thank for propelling Wolverine into the mainstream.

THE WOLVERINE
The Wolverine is available on DVD and Blu-ray from 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment from late 2013 priced £9 and £13.97.

WHEN WESLEY SNIPES TOOK THE ROLE OF BLADE, HE TRANSFORMED INTO THE CUSSING, SWORD-WIELDING, LEATHER-WEARING, BAD-ASS COMIC-BOOK MOVIE HERO FANS HOLD IN HIGH ESTEEM. WE LOOK AT WHAT MAKES BLADE SO ENTERTAINING…

BLADE

Film

RUNNING TIME: 120 minutes
RELEASE DATE: 21 August 1998
DIRECTOR: Stephen Norrington
WRITER: David S Goyer
CAST: Wesley Snipes, Stephen Dorff, Kris Kristofferson, N'Bushe Wright, Donal Logue

About

When a young woman is bitten by a vampire during pregnancy and requires an emergency C-section, her life hangs in the balance. She dies before ever seeing her newborn child. But the child grows up to be a rare breed known as a Daywalker; part human, part vampire, he possesses the superhuman abilities of the creatures that killed his mother as well as their thirst for blood. Instead of joining them, he vows to defeat them to protect the human race. He is Blade. With the help of his mentor Whistler and bitten blood doctor Karen Jenson, Blade sets out to stop a vampire who threatens to take things too far.

As far as memorable movie openings go, *Blade*'s first scenes are right up there with Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and the dawn of man in *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Drew Barrymore's chilling phone conversations in *Scream*.

In stark contrast to the very first scene, which features a woman who is subjected to an emergency C-section having been bitten by a vampire, we follow a young man into a nightclub. He's lured in by a beautiful, apparently human woman, and struts through the crowd in time to the pounding techno music. Despite the abundance of clubbers, nobody wants to club with him. He's caught in a dancing crowd of hostility.

Suddenly, there's red on his hands. Licking it off, he confirms that it's blood. The DJ cranks up the tempo. The banner behind him reads 'BLOODBATH'. The sprinklers kick in and there's blood everywhere. The young man is surrounded by vampires. They're dancing in the blood, drinking the blood, and smearing it over their bodies. That pretty much sets the tone for the rest of the movie: ridiculous, bloody and completely over the top, but awesomely entertaining.

"TO BE HONEST, BLADE STILL FEELS LIKE A SPOOF"

Wesley Snipes' first entrance as Blade is also pretty special. Leathered, buckled and fully armed, he stomps right into the middle of the vampire rave. Half vampire, half human, he's what they call a Daywalker. He has the superhuman strengths possessed by all vampires but none of their weaknesses, besides a lust for blood. Basically, he is untouchable. He shoots up that joint and tackles a group of vampire assassins with nothing but a sword and his own sharp wits. Almost two hours and many violent and bloody deaths later, Blade is a legend.

Though it ended up becoming a New Line Cinema production, Marvel Studios started to develop the film way back in 1992, six years before its first cinema release. Back then, rapper LL Cool J was interested in playing the lead role. But for reasons unknown, the film switched hands to New Line, and LL Cool J's Daywalker dreams were quashed forever. With the new production company came a new script, which was written by a then up and coming screenwriter called David S Goyer. At the time, Goyer only had badly received action and sci-fi films under his belt, including *Death Warrant*, *Kickboxer 2*, *Demonic Toys*, *The Puppet Master*, *The Crow: City Of Angels* and *Dark City* (which, to be fair, wasn't bad). Now, of course, he's known as the beast that wrote Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight* trilogy and Zack Snyder's *Man Of Steel*, but it was his work on *Blade*, *Blade II* and *Blade: Trinity* (which he also directed) that set him on the path to genre superstar status.

Before Goyer started on the script for *Blade*, New Line wanted to make the film into something that was almost a spoof, but Goyer managed to convince them otherwise. To be honest, *Blade* still feels like a spoof, with its ultra-violent massacres and 'so cheesy they're cool' quips and one-liners. That's the thing about *Blade*: it's simultaneously lame and completely awesome. A scene that sums this fact up nicely is Karen Jenson's encounter with Krieger in her apartment.

When Karen returns home after her first meeting with Blade, there's already someone there. It's a cop who introduces himself as Officer Krieger of the 42nd precinct. The "door was open." He's just there on a "routine check." Sure you are, pal. Karen hears him out. He explains how her co-workers at the hospital said that she was kidnapped the night before. The other doctor she was with, Curtis Webb, died. But she shouldn't worry about that right now.

"Why?" Karen asks. Krieger suddenly switches from good cop to bad cop. "Because you're dead too, bitch!" he snarls, and starts to attack her. Karen whips out a bottle of mace and sprays him square in the face. Krieger squirms about for a while before realising he hasn't ➪

Meet Blade: part vampire, part human.

42

BLADE

No one expected this vampire-superhero-action-horror film of a mid-level black hero to be such a success, but it knocked *Saving Private Ryan* from the number one spot

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ BLADE WAS a game-changer. It may not enjoy an ardent fan following since its release almost 20 years ago, and it often seems to be overlooked in the body of superhero film adaptations, but *Blade* paved the way for modern superhero films. The genre was suffering badly after the embarrassment of Warner Bros.' *Batman and Robin* (so much so that they put the franchise on hold for eight years).Could the Marvel Cinematic Universe exist if *Blade* hasn't first demonstrated the box office power of a Marvel comic book hero on the big screen (with two successful sequels, no less)? Would the Marvel and Netflix *Defenders* series exist if *Blade* hadn't first spawned a television series in 2006?

Since Fox's *X-Men*, the box office can tend to feel over-saturated with comic book adaptations. Unfortunately, the story of the big screen's first African American superhero remains mostly unsung in the busy genre.

CLASSIC QUOTES

"I'M GONNA BE NAUGHTY! I'M GONNA BE A NAUGHTY VAMPIRE GOD!"
QUINN

"I WAS BORN A VAMPIRE, AS WAS EVERY MEMBER OF THIS HOUSE. BUT YOU, FROST… YOU WERE MERELY TURNED"
DRAGONETTI

"THERE ARE WORSE THINGS OUT TONIGHT THAN VAMPIRES"
BLADE

"HAVE THE GOOD GRACE TO DIE WITH SOME FUCKING DIGNITY"
DEACON FROST

actually been blinded. "What is this, garlic?" he laughs. "He said it would work against vampires," she says. It's cheesy and ridiculous, but exciting and awesome. But that's not even the best/worst bit.

After a dramatic entrance and a well-timed one-line, Blade whacks Krieger around the head. "You used me as bait?" asks Karen, scandalised. "Get over it," says Blade, and beats Krieger up some more. Justice is served, mofo. It's awful but beautiful, and brings a tear to the eye for many different, complicated reasons.

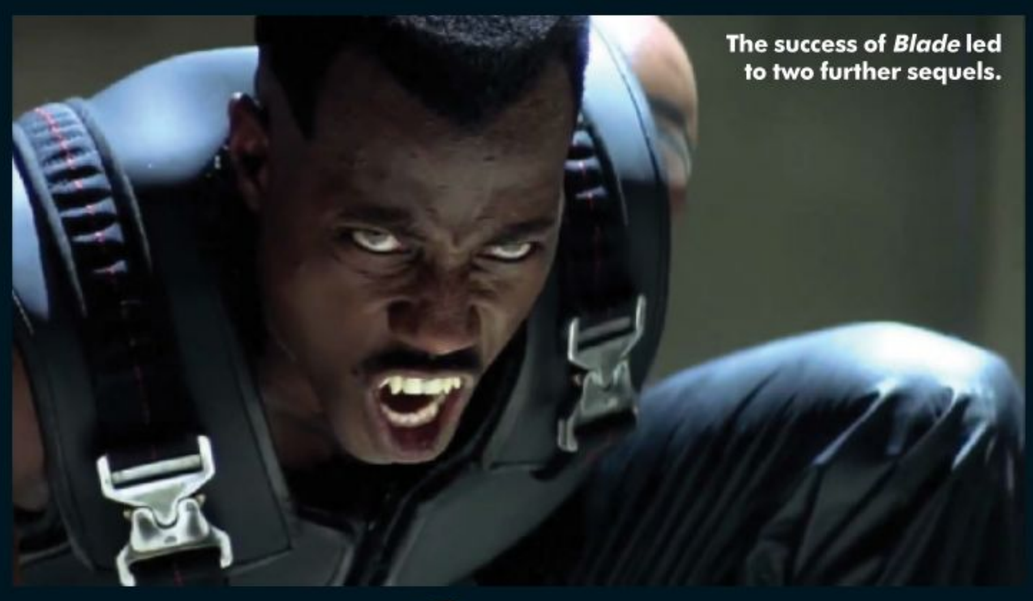
Part of what makes *Blade* so awesome is the casting. Stephen Dorff is weird and chilling as the Big Bad vampire Deacon Frost (a role which was apparently first offered to Jet Li). Kris Kristofferson is spot on as Blade's wizened and quip-throwing mentor and weaponsmith Abraham Whistler. N'Bushe Wright is charming and fierce as haematologist-turned-almost-vampire Dr Karen Jenson. As for Wesley Snipes as our enigmatic protagonist Eric 'Blade' Brookes, many Snipes fans, if not all of them, consider *Blade* to be his best work. The character is what he became best known for, and La Magra knows he hasn't acted in anything as interesting since. *Blade*'s action-heavy storyline and dark themes gave Snipes the opportunity to show off both his athletic prowess and his ability to act tortured and emotionally scarred in 300 different variations. It also helps that Snipes looks damn fantastic in Blade's shades. Can you imagine LL Cool J rocking a pair of sun specs with those dimples? Don't think so.

"MANY SNIPES FANS CONSIDER BLADE HIS BEST WORK"

Before Snipes was cast as the vampire hunter, New Line actually had their eye on a couple of other actors, including Denzel Washington and Laurence Fishburne. But in Goyer's mind, Snipes was always the perfect choice. And as if he couldn't get any cooler, he's a martial artist in real life as well as in the film, having started training when he was 12 years old. He's now a fifth dan black belt in Shotokan (a hardcore style of karate) and a second dan black belt in Hapikido (a highly eclectic Korean martial art). Wow, Snipes, wow.

Though *Blade* wasn't made by Marvel Studios, and pre-dates the Marvel Cinematic Universe, it's still technically Marvel. It was too good a concept for them to skip completely, so Marvel Studios' mother enterprise Marvel Entertainment acted as an on-the-side production company with New Line Cinema. There's also the whole thing of it being based on a Marvel character that ties it together.

Eric 'Blade' Brookes made his first appearance as a supporting character in the comic *The Tomb Of Dracula* in 1973. He was created by writer and artist team Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan, and went on to star and co-star in several other different comic-book series. In the early days, Blade was more of an everyman. He wasn't originally a vampire-human hybrid – he was a man that developed immunity to vampire bites. As a result, he didn't have



The success of *Blade* led to two further sequels.

***Blade* can lay claim to being the first truly great Marvel movie.**

QUIPS AND GRAVY

The 5 best quip masters of comic book movies

MR FREEZE
(BATMAN & ROBIN)

1 We all love a good pun anyway, but lines like "Tonight's forecast: a freeze is coming", "Ice to see you" and "Chill" bypass cheesy and become works of art. What more can we expect from Arnie?

THOR
(THOR)

2 When he's in the right mood, everything that comes out of the God of Thunder's mouth both beautiful and hilarious. It's that semi-Shakespearean repartee. It really gives him the winning edge over everyone else.

CATWOMAN
(BATMAN RETURNS)

3 Selina Kyle's suggestive and pun-heavy quips often invoke a weird state of being between arousal and absolute terror, which is most likely what makes her so lethal. And we love it.

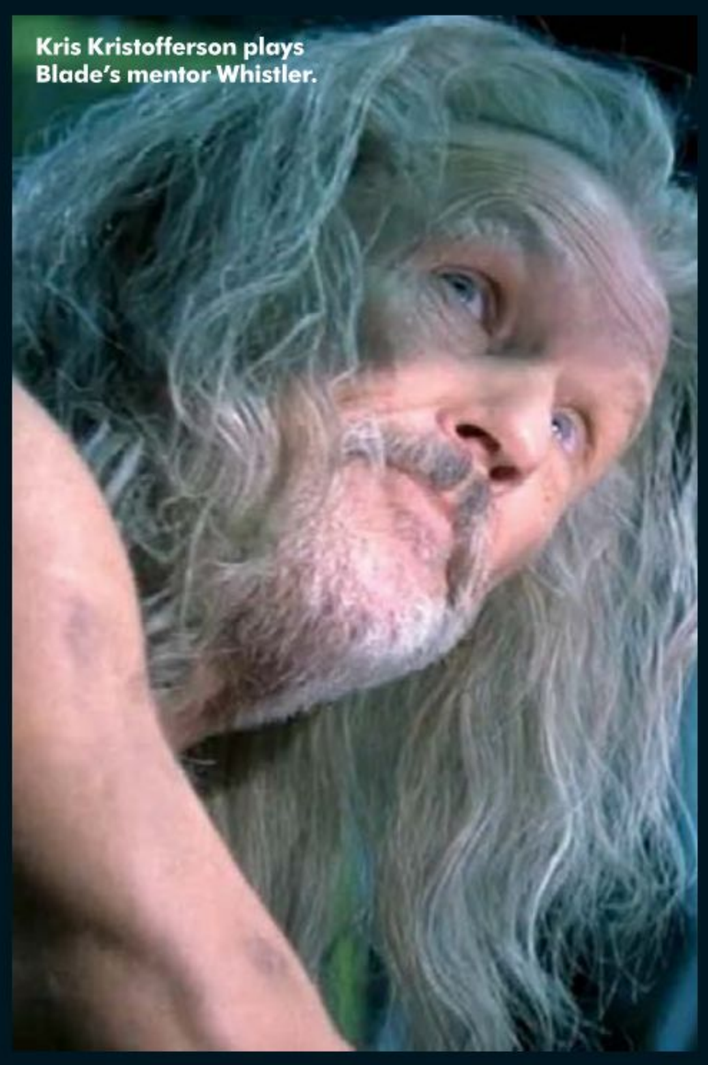
Refreshingly, it didn't stint on blood and gore like other adaptations.

Stephen Dorff takes on villain duties as Deacon Frost.

the superhuman speed and strength he possesses in the film. He had to rely on his skill and wits until he was finally bitten by Morbius the Living Vampire, and become the Daywalker. His weapons were also a bit different, with Wolfman and Colan opting for teakwood knives and mahogany stakes, which he would use to impale his opponents. Later on, he acquired a larger arsenal consisting of a variety of bladed weapons like long swords and katanas, flamethrowers, and UV and silver-based weapons. But he still had the leather coat and shades.

Despite the huge impact Wolfman and Colan had on both Blade the character and *Blade* the franchise, the pair only received a 'based on the characters by' credit in the film. Wolfman subsequently sued Marvel Comics over ownership of *Blade*, but ultimately lost out. As a result, he and Colan weren't even mentioned in the credits of *Blade II*.

Also disappointingly, Stan Lee originally filmed a cameo as a cop in the bloodbath club scene, but it was deleted from the final cut. It would have been his second ever Marvel comic-book movie cameo after *The Trial Of The Incredible Hulk* in 1989.



Kris Kristofferson plays Blade's mentor Whistler.

TONY STARK/IRON MAN
(IRON MAN)

4 Tony Stark? More like Tony SNARK, amirite? Every word that comes out of his mouth, as Iron Man or the CEO of Stark Industries, is absolutely dripping in his usual sarcasm and irony.

DRAX THE DESTROYER
(GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY)

5 The most hilarious member of the *Guardians Of The Galaxy* team, though perhaps unintentionally, Drax's greatest hits include "I'm not a princess" and "I would cut his head clean off".

43

MAX ROCKATANSKY

Patrol Officer, grieving husband and father, Road Warrior and scourge of wasteland bandits everywhere, Mad Max Rockatansky is not a man to mess with

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★½
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★½
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★½

■ AT THE opening of George Miller's *Mad Max*, Patrol Officer Max Rockatansky isn't mad. He's a responsible law enforcer with friends and a family, dutifully attempting to keep the peace in a society teetering on the brink of anarchy.

A series of violent tragedies, however, sees that Max eventually lives up to his title, becoming a scarred and grizzled wanderer that dispenses his own particularly brutal brand of justice.

Portrayed with taciturn menace by Mel Gibson, and later Tom Hardy, Max's trajectory as an antihero mimics that of the dying world around him – a spiral towards oblivion, with tantalising flashes of hope thrown in.

MAX ROCKATANSKY

44
THE THING

The Thing is one of the most unsettling horror movies or all time. It tanked in the cinema because of its competition, but has become a solid cult classic ever since

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
BOX OFFICE: ★★★★★
SCARE FACTOR: ★★★★★
SPECIAL FX: ★★★★★

■ JOHN CARPENTER'S *The Thing* is a cult classic that is truly deserving of its status. Up against *ET* upon its original release, it didn't fare all that well in the cinemas. But over three decades on, *The Thing* has stood the test of time due to its deeply unsettling atmosphere, and truly wonderful premise.

In remote Antartica, a group of scientists are interupted when a helicopter comes tearing towards their camp shooting at a dog. They take it in, and soon realise why. It attacks humans and other canines alike and assumes the shapes of its victims. The helicopter pilot (Kurl Russell) and the camp doctor (Richard Dysart) lead the crew in battle against the creature as it gradually picks them off one by one.

It's the Eighties, but the prothetic make-up and visual effects stand out, and while its a little bit dated, it's just too brilliant to spoil the experience.

JOHN CARPENTER'S THE THING

ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVELY UNSETTLING SCI-FI/HORROR FILMS OF ALL TIME, THE THING DIED A BOX-OFFICE DEATH UPON ITS RELEASE IN 1982, THANKS IN PART TO A FILM FEATURING A CERTAIN ALIEN WHO WANTED TO PHONE HOME. WE TALK TO JOHN CARPENTER ABOUT HOW HIS SHAPE-SHIFTING SHOCKER EVOLVED INTO ITS OWN TERRIFYING BEAST TO BECOME A DEFINITIVE EIGHTIES CULT CLASSIC…

"You gotta be fucking kidding!" Perhaps no line spoken in movie history has so perfectly summed up the mutual reaction of both the characters' and the audience's jaw-dropping bewilderment than that appropriate zinger from John Carpenter's masterpiece *The Thing*. But in retrospect, the remark could just have easily expressed the sentiment of the director when he was originally approached to re-make Howard Hawks' seminal 1951 sci-fi horror classic *The Thing From Another World*.

"I wasn't very interested initially, as I loved the original, and thought it was one of the great jump-out-of-your-seat-popcorn-flying movies, so I didn't really want to touch it," reflects Carpenter, a self-confessed Hawks aficionado. "It was my friend [co-producer] Stuart Cohen who then suggested that we forget the original movie and just completely reinvent it by going back to the novella. I thought, 'That's not a bad idea!'"

Constricted by the crude practical aesthetics of the time, the original Fifties film featured a towering man-in-a-monster-suit (TV series *Gunsmoke* actor James Arness) as the bloodthirsty titular vegetable-based humanoid who infiltrates an isolated Antarctica research station. However, in John W Campbell's 1938 source novel *Who Goes There?* the researchers come into contact with the far more unpredictable prospect of an interchangeable creature who can perfectly imitate any of them. "There was a passing glance to the [shape-shifting origins] in the original film," Carpenter acknowledges. "Near the end of the movie when the scientists are making their last stand, one of the soldiers says, 'I just had this thought – what if he can read my mind?' But that was the closest they came to it."

Consequently, Carpenter would completely run with Campbell's 'who can you trust?' mystery concept, and the idea of an enigmatic, shape-shifting creature would be realised thanks to the vivid imagination of a 22-year-old special make-up effects wiz named Rob Bottin, who had previously impressed with his startling lycanthrope transformations for Joe Dante's *The Howling*. "He gave me one of the clues to do the movie when he said, '*The Thing* can look like anything because it has imitated all these life-forms, so it doesn't have to be one creature'," recalls Carpenter. "And I thought, 'Well, that's really new, we haven't seen that before, and we can do some really crazy things', so that's where we started."

> "I THOUGHT, 'WELL, THAT'S REALLY NEW, WE HAVEN'T SEEN THAT BEFORE, AND WE CAN DO SOME REALLY CRAZY THINGS'" JOHN CARPENTER

Carpenter reunited with long-time colleague Kurt Russell for *The Thing*.

The British Columbia shoot proved to be a gruelling one for all concerned.

Key to the unnerving conviction of Campbell's story was the overwhelming sense of psychological paranoia and entrapment among characters confined within a tight physical space where a monster lurks. But unlike Carpenter's previous films, which predominately featured strong female roles, the director was attracted to the intriguing prospect of an entirely male-dominated movie. The original intention was to have an ensemble piece with 12 characters of equal footing. However, when Kurt Russell came on board to play pilot and eventual leader RJ MacReady, that dynamic altered.

"At first I wasn't sure. I kind of wanted to work with someone else just for variation," says Carpenter, who had just finished working with Russell in *Escape From*

New York. "The studio, however, loved him, and he chose to play it very realistically, which I loved, so I was really happy."

Apart from the roll call of recognisable character actors that included Wilford Brimley, Keith David and Donald Moffat, another distinguishable performer was that of an Alaskan Malamute, which is seen being chased by a helicopter piloted by trigger-happy Norwegians at the beginning of the film. The enigma behind the pursuit is momentarily kept blurred, although hints toward the canine's true identity lurk within its subsequent voyeuristic behaviour, particularly when it creeps quietly down a corridor inside the research station, pausing to glance through several doorways to survey the scene.

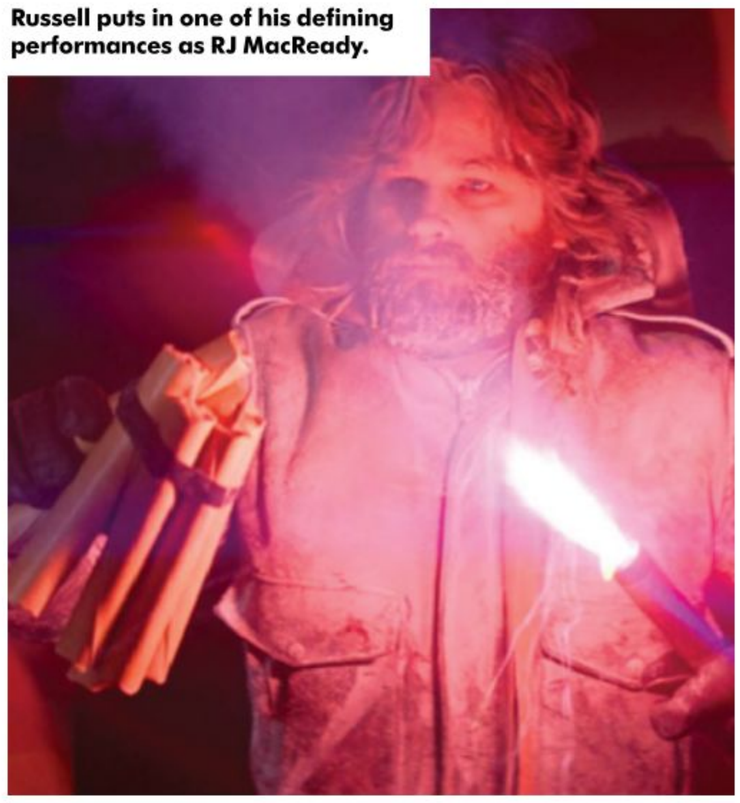
"He was great," nods Carpenter. "He was part wolf [and part husky], which is the reason he had high intelligence, and that scene was remarkable for an animal, because the camera was right in front of him and he didn't bat an eye; he just followed his marks." Although it was the late physical effects maestro Stan Winston who would realise the terrifyingly tentacled alien origin of the four-legged creature via impressive puppetry techniques, *The Thing* would ultimately remain Bottin's baby, with the young FX wiz and his 40-strong team creating some of the most grotesque prosthetic xenomorphic concoctions of all time.

"The fear was that they'd laugh at us. I didn't want to end up with a guy in a suit like I'd seen in countless Fifties science fiction films when I was a kid," says Carpenter. The director needn't have worried. Take the notorious sequence where a man administers CPR on his colleague, only for his arms to be suddenly severed by teeth formulating from within the victim's chest, leading to the infamous segment where the imitated head tears from the body, falls to the floor, sprouts legs and scurries off – and then that legendary zinger. "[Original scribe] Bill Lancaster came up with the line, 'You gotta be fucking kidding!' in the middle of shooting after we started describing what this creature was going to look like," attributes Carpenter. "It worked out great – it was the perfect moment of humour in an otherwise grotesquely horrible scene."

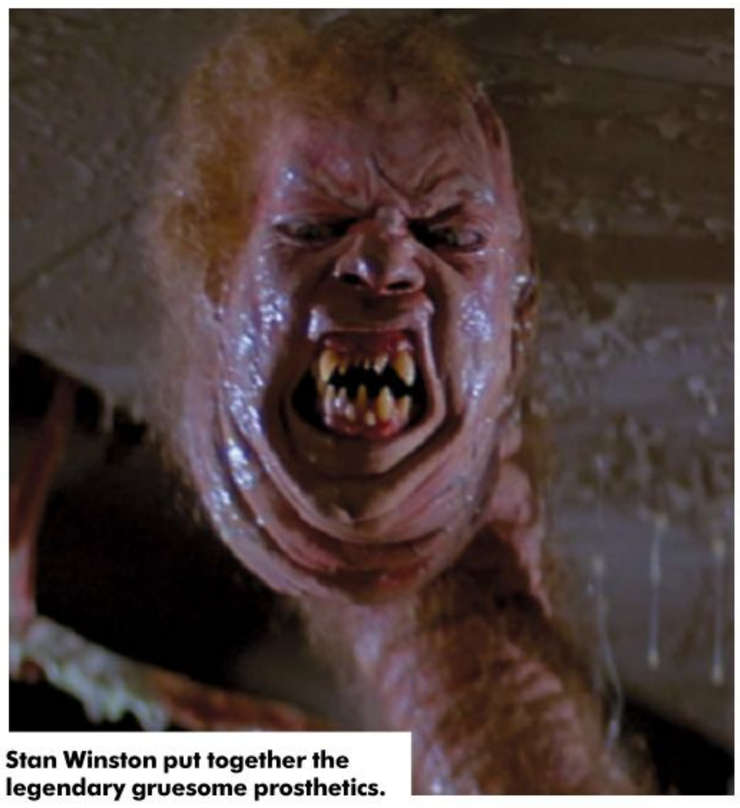
But *The Thing* is also remarkable for its nail-biting suspense. One of the great edge-of-your-seat sequences remains its pivotal blood test scene, where MacReady determines the authenticity of his team by subjecting samples of their blood to a heated piece of copper wire. "I loved filming it – it was one of my favourite scenes in the movie," considers Carpenter. "Once I figured what this blood test scene was going to be about, I knew I had a movie I could work with, and that was the secret for me. It took four days to shoot, but everybody was really into the scene, so it couldn't have gone better. It was really fun to do."

Less fun was the British Columbian location shoot, where cast and crew were subjected to sub-freezing winter conditions. Nevertheless, the uncomfortable climate lent itself its own sense of realism, helping to build a bond between cast members and giving authenticity to characters cut off from the world in such close proximity to one another for an elongated period of time.

"THE FEAR WAS THAT THEY'D LAUGH AT US. I DIDN'T WANT TO END UP WITH A GUY IN A SUIT"
JOHN CARPENTER



Russell puts in one of his defining performances as RJ MacReady.



Stan Winston put together the legendary gruesome prosthetics.

Giving punctuation to all the bleakness on screen was legendary composer Ennio Morricone's score. Unusually for Carpenter, this would mark the first time in the filmmaker's career where he didn't write the music for his own film. "Nobody wanted me to compose the score, so I wasn't asked. That was fine with me, so I chose Morricone," says the filmmaker, who was such an admirer of the master's work that he marched down the aisle to a Morricone theme on his wedding day.

Interestingly, the pulsating electronic beats that accompany the opening credit sequence and subsequent helicopter dog pursuit evoke the low-key menacing simplicity of archetypal Carpenter scores to such a degree you'd swear it was created by the filmmaker himself. But the director claims that apart from some bridging work the Italian maestro, renowned for his iconic collaborations with Sergio Leone, was responsible for composing the entire score. "There are two basic parts to his score. One was that opening theme, which is a very simple electronic piece, then the second part, was some very heavy-duty orchestral pieces, which are just beautiful."

Renowned for his bleak, nihilistic endings, *The Thing* (considered by some to be the first part of Carpenter's unofficial 'Apocalypse trilogy' that continues with *Prince Of Darkness* and concludes with *In The Mouth Of Madness*) is certainly no exception. It has one of the grimmest conclusions in the filmmaker's entire oeuvre, where the two surviving characters MacReady and Childs (Keith David) sit and wait for their inevitable demise, neither of them sure whether the other is otherworldly. "I describe myself as a short-term pessimist but a long-term optimist," claims the director.

Despite the poignant denouement, rumours of an alternative ending filmed as a safety measure have surfaced since the film's release. Carpenter says that no other ending exists – however, he does admit to shooting an additional shot. "I got a little worried that we would be accused of having a 'what happened?' -type scenario, so I took a shot of MacReady sitting in safety, but it was just a shot," he assures. "It would have been a terrible, horrible way to end the movie. It was just a moment of insecurity."

But perhaps because of this bold finale, audiences and critics didn't take to *The Thing*, and the film was

One of Carpenter's bleakest films, it's considered part of his unofficial 'Apocalypse' trilogy.

At the time, *The Thing* wasn't the mega-hit they'd hoped for.

An additional ending scene was shot, but never used.

targeted for both its bleak outlook and the abstract excessiveness of its special effects. "Even the fans were in uproar," says Carpenter. "Why people didn't like that film when it was released is beyond me! But in retrospect it was a big-time downer about the end of the world, so it worked out to be a pretty grim story."

Bad timing arguably contributed too, with the film released just two weeks after Spielberg's instant success story *ET: The Extraterrestrial*. Perhaps audiences were more comfortable with a compassionate alien than a menacing one who could take over your entire being. Sensibilities evolve, however, and *The Thing* found its audience on home video and became a cult classic that is largely considered superior to the original Hawks film.

"*The Thing* is about the ultimate end of mankind and the end of things. It's also about these levels of trust in humanity, and that's what the movie really focuses on," reflects Carpenter. "What happens when you can no longer trust? What happens if you know your friends and your comrades, but you don't know if they're human or not? That's the essence of the movie: loved ones who attack you. *The Thing* has a lot of truth in it – dressed up as a monster movie."

BETTER LEFT UNSAID

FIVE THINGS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE THING

1 FEMALE TOUCH

While *The Thing* remains a completely male-dominated movie, actress Adrienne Barbeau, who was then John Carpenter's wife, lent a female touch by providing the vocals of MacReady's chess playing computer. A scene featuring a blow-up sex doll was also filmed, but never made it into the movie. "It was a stupid scene that didn't go anywhere, so we just dropped it," confirms Carpenter.

2 DOUBLE TAKE

For the notorious resuscitation scene where the toothy alien chest severs Dr Cooper's arms, a real-life amputee stood in, donning a mask that resembled actor Richard Dysart.

3 SEQUEL STORY

Carpenter has considered filming a sequel. One story would centre on the rescue of the two surviving characters due to a signal being successfully transmitted from the research station before its subsequent destruction. Carpenter now claims he would have followed the Dark Horse Comics' stories. One of these follows soul survivor MacReady as he pursues the creature to New Zealand, while in another subtitled *Questionable Research* it is revealed that while MacReady is human, second survivor Childs is indeed an alien. A prequel eventually surfaced in 2011, to a largely negative critical reception.

4 COWBOY CASTING

Clint Eastwood was at one time considered for the role of MacReady. Following the casting of Lee Van Cleef in *Escape From New York* and working with composer Ennio Morricone on *The Thing*, it would have made an apt continuation of Carpenter collaborating with renowned director Sergio Leone's associates.

5 THE X-FILES HOMAGE

The eighth episode of the first season of *The X-Files* is a direct homage to *The Thing*. It concerns Mulder and Scully's investigation into the deaths of an isolated Alaskan research team who have come into contact with an extraterrestrial parasite that has infiltrated their bodies. Akin to the film, they become unsure whether they can trust each other. Graeme Murray, who worked as a set decorator on *The Thing*, was hired to create the confined set where events take place.

45
ROBOCOP

After policeman, Alex Murphy, is murdered in a crime-stricken future Detroit, dodgy corporation OCP revives him, creating the superhuman cyborg, Robocop

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ CONCEIVED BY Edward Neumeier, after hearing *Blade Runner*'s plot centred on a cop fighting robots, Robocop – played by Peter Weller – was also inspired by comic character *Judge Dredd*. The 1987 movie, which sees the super cyborg almost single-handedly battle New York lawbreakers, won an Academy Award and was nominated for a further two. It frequents many a top-films-of-all-time list, after exploding onto the screen – following 11 X ratings, before its eventual R classification – to wide praise and positive reviews. Robocop, with his classified fourth directive, hooked fans, subsequently spawning merchandise, sequels, TV shows, animated series', videogames and comic adaptations.

ROBOCOP TRILOGY
RoboCop Trilogy is available on Blu-ray from 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment priced £14.65

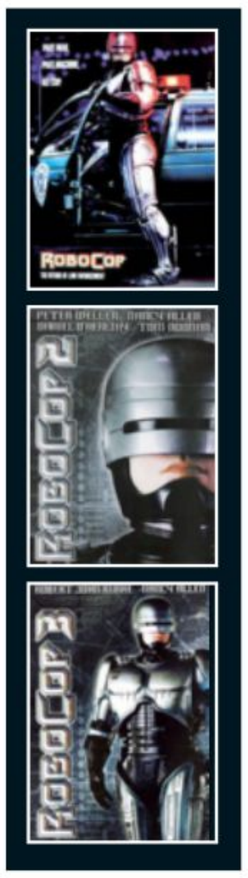
ROBOCOP
OPERATOR'S MANUAL

ROBOCOP BECAME AN ICONIC CREATION OF THE 1980S, SPAWNING TWO SEQUELS, AN ANIMATED SERIES, A PAIR OF TELEVISION FRANCHISES AND ALL NUMBER OF MERCHANDISE TIE-INS. WITH A PROPOSED REBOOT ON THE HORIZON, SCIFINOW LOOKS BACK AT THE LEGACY OF DETROIT'S TOP LAWMAN

Ah, the 1980s. Read Peter Biskind's seminal book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* and you will get the impression that it was a decade in which Hollywood began to populate the screens with big, boisterous, blockbusters – designed solely to swag in mucho moolah rather than to stimulate the brain. And, to be fair, the author has a point...

In comparison to the major studio releases of the Seventies (*A Clockwork Orange*, *The Godfather*, *Taxi Driver*), the Eighties saw the post-*Jaws*/*Star Wars*/*Close Encounters* boom in special effects-heavy genre projects positively explode. The result was an unmistakable slant towards Spielberg/Lucas-themed family fare – a factor that surely affected the commercial reception to more 'mature' movies (the saccharine sweet *E.T.* destroyed two of the decade's finest flicks – *The Thing* and *Blade Runner* – at the 1982 summer box office). So, as the era of Ronald Reagan, hair metal and Nintendo spiralled onwards, audiences were told that the future – perfectly in tune with what the White House was preaching economically – was just peachy. After all, the likes of *Back To The Future*, *Ghostbusters* and the *Indiana Jones* series (as good as they were) showed that brave Americans – of all ages – could, and would, overcome all obstacles placed in their way. Moreover, if Rambo could go back to Vietnam and win the war (as seen in 1985's *First Blood Part II*), and Harrison Ford could liberate Indian slave children (*The Temple Of Doom*) then things could not be better. Everyone was leaving the multiplex with a smile on their face, buying the relevant tie-in merchandise, feeling good about the stars and stripes and, well, who was going to complain about that? Trust that enfant terrible of Dutch cinema Mr Paul Verhoeven to put a spanner in the works...

Yes, prior to turning the sci-fi genre on its head with 1987's *RoboCop*, Verhoeven was courting controversy on the European art-house scene thanks to his rape and violence filled shocker *Spetters* (1980) and 1983's sexually explicit noir *The Fourth Man* (a dry run for his later *Basic Instinct*). Clearly, this was not a man who would be taking on a sequel to *E.T.* any time soon.



Arriving in Hollywood with a bad boy reputation, the filmmaker turned his attention to 1985's gritty fantasy epic *Flesh + Blood* before sinking his teeth into everyone's favourite copper – by way of a script penned by up-and-coming writers Edward Neumeier and Michael Miner. However, unlike the 'feel good' vibe that accompanied most US sci-fi features of the time (even John Carpenter had done a U-turn from the icy cynicism of *The Thing* into the more accessible, and successful, *Starman*), *RoboCop* – much like *Blade Runner* before it – painted a distinctly dystopian view of the future. It was the dark, and ultimately more realistic, side of Reagan's free market politics, with Detroit City's police department undergoing privatisation and the area's man power being overtaken by machine power (something that would soon happen for real, as seen in Michael Moore's Detroit documentary *Roger & Me*).

Meanwhile, in RoboCop's world, the corporate powers continue to sell junk television and needless consumer goods to the populace in a dire attempt to offer 'escapism' from the very real anarchy that has melted down onto the streets. In the midst of this, of course, is Peter Weller as Officer Murphy – shot to pieces by a gang of hoodlums (led by Kurtwood Smith's perpetually stern-faced Clarence Boddicker) and reborn, Jesus-style, as the title character... a half human/half robot crime-fighter who the city's powers hope will bring 'salvation' to what has become a lawless land. In the story, Weller's RoboCop, along with his female sidekick Officer Anne Lewis (played by De Palma regular Nancy Allen) must liberate the police force, owned by the multinational OCP Corporation, from ties to mobster pay-offs. However, RoboCop soon begins to have flashbacks to his mortal life – and the individuals responsible for his death.

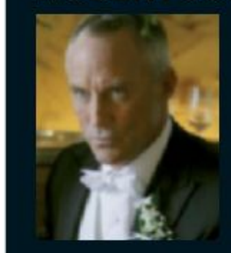
ROBO-CURSE?

Think being part of a major film franchise will lead to fame and fortune? Think again! Here is the legacy of Detroit's most famous futuristic lawmen (and woman)...

PETER WELLER

Weller would follow up his *RoboCop* credentials with the flop monster mash *Leviathan* (1989) and Abel Ferrara's muddled *Cat Chaser*. In the wake of *RoboCop 2* was 1991's messy *Naked Lunch*, while 1995's space-caper *Screamers* bombed. After spending some of the Noughties studying for a PHD in Italian Renaissance Art History at UCLA, he won a recurring part in TV show *24* and will next be seen in the crime thriller *Once Fallen* (albeit fifth billed).

ROBERT JOHN BURKE



Having featured in 1992's cult favourite *Dust Devil*, Burke would use his turn in the much-hated *RoboCop 3* to, well, fade into obscurity. Unfortunately, the second actor to take on the tin-terminator would find it difficult to land another leading man role: 1996's *Thinner* gave him a brief reprieve before it was back to bit parts. Thankfully, recurring roles in television mainstays such as *Rescue Me*, *Law & Order* and *Gossip Girl* have secured him as a reliable character actor.

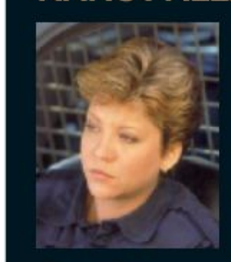
RICHARD EDEN

Filling the role of RoboCop in 1993's inaugural television series, Eden has uttered more mechanical dialogue than any other performer to wear the fabled futuristic attire. Alas low budget action flicks (such as 1996's *Public Enemies*) and television guest appearances (on the likes of *Earth: Final Conflict* and *Relic Hunter*) were what followed – albeit in large enough numbers to keep him busy. He most recently wrote and produced the upcoming horror opus *The Intervention*.

PAGE FLETCHER

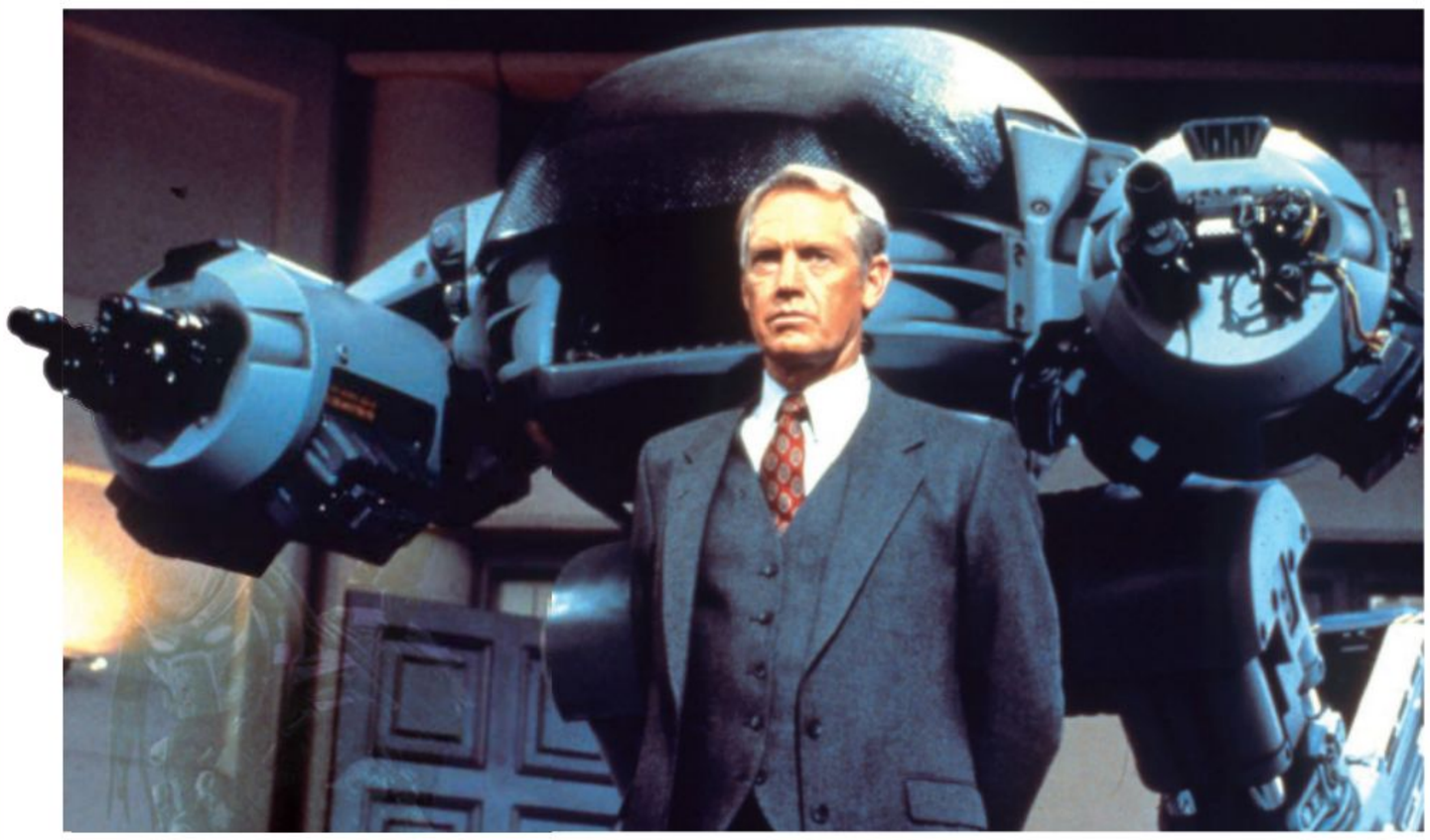
The undersized actor was, arguably, the worst RoboCop of them all – and his turn in *Prime Directives* is fondly remembered by almost no one. Since then the thespian has only one more credit to his name: a major part in 2002's made-for-television crime-thriller *Haven't We Met Before?* He wins respect, however, for his command of the title role in the cult television series *The Hitchhiker*.

NANCY ALLEN



Allen rose to fame thanks to her turns in *Carrie*, *Dressed To Kill* and *Blow Out*. However, with the age-phobic Hollywood casting her out as she approached her forties, Allen would become a B-flick mainstay after her *RoboCop* reprieve. How else can you explain *Poltergeist III* or *Children Of The Corn 666*?

In the future, all USB connection will double up as lethal weapons.



ORION® Memories

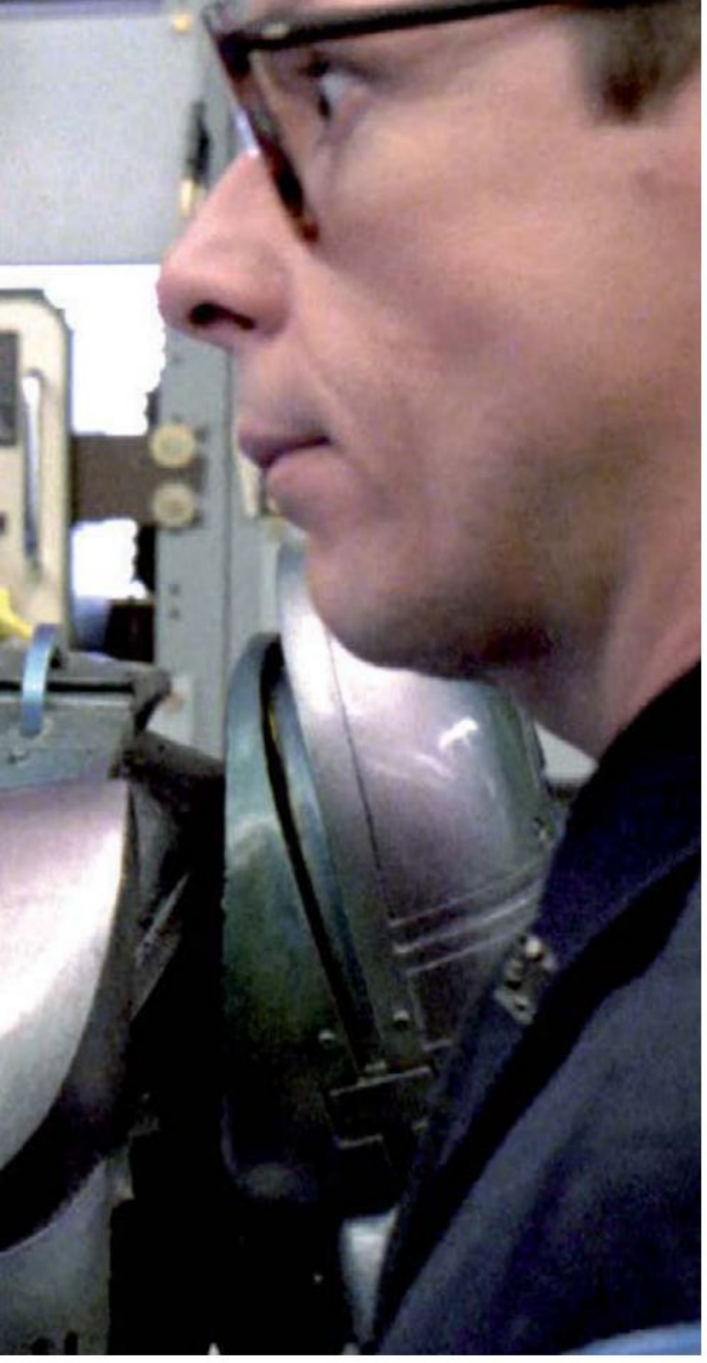
The story behind the studio behind RoboCop

Orion Pictures was, at one time, a major player in Hollywood. Formed by some disgruntled former executives of the soon-to-go-under United Artists (which had become owned by the conglomerate Transamerica), the company would score its first major hit with the Dudley Moore sex-comedy *10* (1980) and also lay claim to the long-lasting television show *Cagney & Lacey*. Slapstick such as 1983's *Class*, 1986's twosome of *The Three Amigos* and *Back To School*, as well as 1989's *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*, provided more boffin box office, while 1984's *The Terminator* and *RoboCop* helped to establish Orion as a groundbreaking genre producer. Inevitably, the corporation was quick to look at ways to maximise the potential of both properties, with sequels pushed into development.

Things looked good critically too, with Academy Awards being thrown at the 1984 release of *Amadeus* and 1986's Vietnam War opus *Platoon* – while reliable franchise features such as 1982's *Amityville II: The Possession* (leading to 1983's *Amityville 3D*) and *Return Of The Living Dead* (beginning in 1985) kept the green ink flowing. Meanwhile the new decade got off to a shooting start with 1990's epic western *Dances With Wolves*. Considering such titanic titles as these, you would be hard pressed to understand why, come 1992, Orion would be in the bankruptcy courts, although the answer is actually quite simple... By producing 'auteur' driven vanity projects the company risked life and limb (this is the reason that few directors get carte blanche to recognise their visions nowadays).

Clearly not learning from the example set by United Artists (which staked its future on Michael Cimino's dull-as-dishwater, but super-expensive, historical flop *Heaven's Gate* and went bankrupt as a result), Orion gave *The Godfather*'s Francis Ford Coppola free reign on 1984's notoriously costly catastrophe *The Cotton Club*, which grossed less than 10 per cent of the $100 million it needed to break even. Other ill-advised Orion outings included 1988's ridiculously bad *E.T.* cash-in *Mac And Me*, the same year's *Erik The Viking* and 1990's *The Hot Spot* and action farce *Navy Seals* (which, along with *Heaven's Gate*, soon became a byword for big money bombs).

With that lot, plus *The Cotton Club* debacle, Orion was ordering in crate loads of red ink and even the multi-Academy Award success of *Dances With Wolves* and the sleeper horror smash *The Silence Of The Lambs* could not help the company. Declaring bankruptcy on 11 December 1991, Orion's 'major' 1992 slate of releases, which included *RoboCop 3* and George Romero's lavish *The Dark Half* were postponed indefinitely. Although both of these titles would finally see release



Few series offer the satire and set pieces that *RoboCop* does.

in 1993, to muted fanfare, Orion would not rise up from the grave (despite interest from New Line Cinema, who hoped to purchase the company and its back catalogue).

Currently, the production house's titles – including the flops – are available on DVD courtesy of MGM Entertainment. A somewhat sad, and ironic, end for a company that was instigated by a group of producers who wanted to remain independent from the Hollywood studio system.

"I am not a science fiction-fan at all," Verhoeven recently told Ain't It Cool News. "To tell you the truth, I hate science fiction," he continued. "The *RoboCop* script was actually in my garbage-can when my wife persuaded me to take another look at it. There are three American films of mine that I really stand by: *RoboCop*, *Basic Instinct* and *Starship Troopers*. The rest were considerably worse."

Thankfully, Verhoeven demonstrated a natural shine for the material that he was given and *RoboCop* quickly joined the aforementioned *Blade Runner* as one of the first truly postmodern genre films. Firmly aware of its own politics and surroundings, the picture was a hard-hitting comic book satire that, as well as following an unmistakably left-wing agenda (the movie's producer, Jon Davison, has even frankly referred to it as "fascism for liberals"), boasted some jaw-dropping special effects. Brought in to oversee such technical trickery were Rob Bottin (then fresh from *The Howling* and *The Thing*) and stop-motion Oscar-winner Phil Tippett (whose credits include everything from *Star Wars* to creating Howard the Duck).

"*RoboCop* was a complete surprise to me," laughs Tippett when SciFiNow catches up with him. "The politics were evident in the original script but it was something that never leapt off the page or anything. So the wonderful significance of that film is that Paul snuck it all in without anyone ever noticing anything. I think that Paul's nomadic handling of the material brought a lot to the movie. I think in *Starship Troopers* it was even more obvious, which might be why he rates that, along with *RoboCop*, as one of his favourites." In an interview with the website The Jigsaw Lounge, however, Verhoeven argues otherwise. "A lot of what we could call the 'sociology' was already in the *RoboCop* script – it was something that the American writers brought in," he affirmed. "*RoboCop* is mostly about the idiocy of American television. These kind of people that flip-flop between extreme sadness, and fun, and a commercial. I always thought that *RoboCop* was my reaction to being thrown into American society, and looking around with wide eyes, thinking 'this is completely crazy.'"

"I hate sci-fi. RoboCop was in my garbage can when my wife persuaded me to take another look" – Paul Verhoeven

Irregardless of who was responsible for *RoboCop*'s many symbolic moments (from the idea of an ultra-Christian, Reagan-era America having a new Christ figure to an entire workforce being made redundant by technology) the film made an indelible impression on both audiences and critics when it was released to cinemas. "I saw it at the first industry screening they held in Hollywood and I remember really responding to its veracity," states Fred Dekker, the man who would go on to helm the ill-fated *RoboCop 3*. "It was extremely pulpy and unapologetic about how broad and brash and kick-ass it was. Even though it was a popcorn movie you could tell it was special and it was going to become a classic."

An instant success, *RoboCop* demonstrated that an adult sci-fi feature need not merely imitate the body count agenda of the action genre (as the comparatively apolitical *The Terminator* and *Predator* had) and paved the way for such smart satires as 1988's twosome of *Alien Nation* and *They Live* and even 1992's gloom-ridden *Alien 3*. "I think *RoboCop* was definitely ahead of its time," adds Tippett – whose special effects obtained a BAFTA nomination. "Verhoeven was, and still is, a wonderful guy to work with; he would keep you very involved with everything – which is what a good director does with his effects team. He also gave you a lot of latitude in terms of what you could bring to the table and he was always very aware of the budget and what we could and could not do. It was a good relationship – and I also enjoyed working with Irvin Kershner when we went on to do *RoboCop 2*. He was another guy who had a firm grasp on visual effects and wanted the very best from you."

Released in 1990, *RoboCop 2* saw Kershner – who had previously obtained major hits with *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Never Say Never Again* – take over from Verhoeven in the director's chair. Unfortunately, the sequel – which was scripted by comic book writer Frank Miller and Walon Green (who would go on to pen the hit show *Law & Order*) – seems unsure of exactly what it wants to be. Part of the reason for this may have something to do with the fact that, in 1988, a 13-part *RoboCop* cartoon series launched on American TV, bringing the character to a more adolescent audience and moving it away from its decidedly adult roots.

Created by Marvel Comics, the animated franchise was an odd choice – especially since Verhoeven's ultra-violent original movie was hardly kid-friendly. Yet, thanks to its success, it goes without saying that children were now an unavoidable hitch for any film follow-up. Consequently, *RoboCop 2* – which was rated R in the States (meaning any age could see it with parental accompaniment) – became 'blessed' with one of the oddest villains in screen history: a 12-year-old Drug Lord that swears, deals, carries a machine gun and watches live vivisections performed on prone policemen. Critic Roger Ebert called the concept "beneath contempt" and, when watched today, it makes *RoboCop 2* feel all the more grimy and unpleasant, especially since the second instalment ups the already colossal gore factor of its predecessor.

"I went to see *RoboCop 2* shortly after I took the gig to do *RoboCop 3* and it seemed to me that the filmmakers were fishing for the right tone," admits Dekker. "Verhoeven had created a tone that I have never felt before in a film since then – *Starship Troopers* notwithstanding. I thought that, especially in terms of the postmodern aspect, Kershner and Frank Miller were having a difficult time getting it right. To be honest, I found the first sequel quite caustic and needlessly violent, but in a way that wasn't balanced by the sense of humour which made the original really work. But then I came in to do the third one... The elephant in the room that needed to be addressed was that Orion had had some success in licensing the character to toy manufacturers and the animated series had taken off as well. There was no denying that kids had been enjoying *RoboCop*, especially on home video."

As such, *RoboCop 2*'s child villain (who eventually becomes 'good') feels like a badly miscalculated attempt to capture the imagination of the pre-pubescent/early teen

market. This aside, Kershner's flick does have some saving graces, predominantly a fast-moving first half hour, which includes satirical news reports of a nuclear power plant (located in the Amazon rainforest) exploding and leaking its contents, as well as an advertisement for 'Magna-volt' – a device which will electrocute, and kill, car thieves. That said, RoboCop's attempt to clean out the still-in-turmoil Detroit City (which OCP wants to transform into an upper class utopia called Delta City) from a drug called Nuke feels like a lazy plot device – although Weller's face-off against the new 'RoboCop 2' crime-fighting model at least looks pretty spectacular.

"This might surprise you but my favourite films do not feature special effects," says Kershner when SciFiNow speaks with him. "I have never actively looked to do these types of films either. I have not made a film for a few years now because the scripts I have been given have just not been very good. With *RoboCop 2* it was stepping into someone else's mythology, much like *The Empire Strikes Back*, but I enjoyed the experience and remain very fond of the film. I was a little hesitant to do it, because I had turned down *Return Of The Jedi*, but I thought it was an interesting idea and I liked the characters." Even so, *RoboCop 2* would mark Kershner's final time calling the shots on a motion picture. "The reason that I never did another movie after *RoboCop 2* has nothing to with the movie, which I know some people were not so fond of," he claims. "Rather I figured 'I have already done some good films and unless I get another really amazing screenplay handed to me I do not want to do something else.' If I do take on another project it would not have a lot of violence in it, which of course *RoboCop* had, but it would probably still be in the fantasy genre... That is where I made my name."

"I think watering down that violent, crazy, drugged-out comic book sensibility was a bad idea" **Fred Dekker**

Although *RoboCop 2* was almost as profitable as the first movie, critical opinion was certainly not as favourable. However, in Hollywood money talks and, inevitably, a third instalment was quickly put on the table by the franchise's cash-strapped production outfit, Orion Pictures (then reeling from such expensive cinematic bombs as *Erik The Viking*, *Eve Of Destruction*, *Great Balls Of Fire* and *She-Devil*). "I got involved with *RoboCop 3* because the executive at Orion at the time, Michelle Manning, was a good friend of mine," recalls Dekker. "Michelle had produced *Sixteen Candles* and *The Breakfast Club* and it became clear to her early on that they did not really know what to do with *RoboCop*. Other franchises, such as *The Terminator* or *Back To The Future* are filmmaker driven, but the character of RoboCop was kind of free-floating. There was no one driving the ship and Michelle came to me and said 'How would you feel about doing something with this?' Well, you really cannot say no to a job like that. Anyone in a similar situation would have done the same thing. So I kind of leapt in, despite some of the obstacles."

Make no mistake: although *RoboCop 3* would turn out to be another disastrous sequel, Dekker's credentials at the time were – at least – impressive. His 1986 debut *Night Of The Creeps* is a tremendous horror-spoof while 1987's *The Monster Squad* effectively paid homage to the classic era of Universal terror flicks. Unfortunately, *RoboCop 3* was saddled with some unfortunate luggage straight from the get-go. "Orion wanted to deliberately aim the film towards a young audience," says Dekker. "The one mandate that they gave me, and there were not many, was that they wanted it to be a PG-13." Irrespective of this studio-imposed handicap, with more finances than the director had ever had access to in the past, Dekker threw himself into the job at hand. "It was the biggest picture I had done," he reveals. "The budget for my films doubled each time. *Night Of The Creeps* cost about $6 million and *The Monster Squad* was about $12.5 million, while *RoboCop 3* was $24 million."

With Peter Weller (who was off doing the similarly ill-fated *Naked Lunch*) replaced by a new RoboCop in the form of Robert John Burke, who struggles horribly with the voice, and Nancy Allen unwisely killed off during the first 40 minutes, *RoboCop 3* focuses on a young homeless child who takes on the tin law enforcer as a sort-of surrogate parent. This time around, an armed police force called The Urban Rehabilitators is attempting to rid people from their houses in order to instigate a re-development project. Meanwhile, a mean-spirited Japanese conglomerate has invested in the near-bankrupt OCP group, leading to a conflict of interests and some decidedly weird robo-ninjas (classic line: "I thought your damn ninja was supposed to take care of RoboCop").

"There was a script that Frank Miller had written for *RoboCop 3* that Orion had thrown away," continues Dekker. "However, I picked it up and dusted it off and there was a lot of stuff in it that I really liked. The whole notion of a conglomerate essentially creating the homeless problem for their own pursuit of money I found extremely left wing and extremely attractive. I also liked the Japanese element, which was kind of en vogue at the time with *Rising Sun* and all the companies that the Japanese were snapping up – such as Sony. I also loved the little girl, which was Frank's

Robo-quotes

Murphy's ten best one-liners

"Dead or alive, you're coming with me"
RoboCop

"Stay out of trouble"
RoboCop after being asked if he has a "message for the kids"

"Your move, creep"
RoboCop after shooting an adversary in the groin

"Serve the public trust, protect the innocent, uphold the law"
RoboCop after being asked his prime directives

"Madam, you have suffered an emotional shock. I will notify a rape crisis centre"
RoboCop to a recently saved, near rape victim

"Think it over creep"
RoboCop 2 Murphy offers some philosophical advice to a hoodlum

"It's a beautiful morning. Shame to waste it"
RoboCop 2 after being re-programmed to be non-violent

"Patience, Lewis. We're only human"
Final line in RoboCop 2

"I hope you are insured"
RoboCop 3 to a hotel manager before busting up the joint

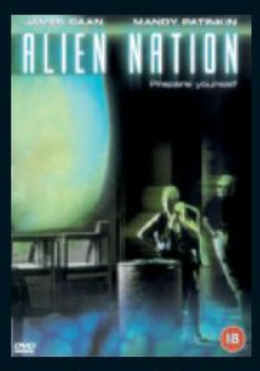
"You may want to call the fire department"
RoboCop 3 when Murphy is armed with a flamethrower

It's an iconic design that could only have been made in the Eighties.

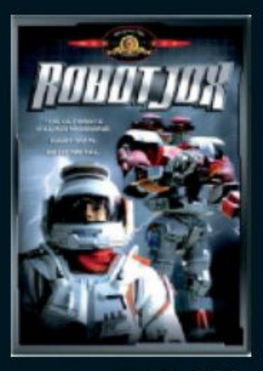
As a series, *RoboCop* leant more towards action than intelligence as it progressed.

Cyberpunk and Robo rip-offs

After the success of RoboCop, enterprising producers of sci-fi features immediately began to dream up similarly nightmarish futuristic scenarios. With RoboCop, and that other popular slice of cyberpunk mayhem, The Terminator, indicating that a solid market existed for violent genre flicks, a number of pictures fused together the plots of both films. Few were worth watching, while some at least provided enough innovation to warrant remembering. Here are ten of the 'best'...



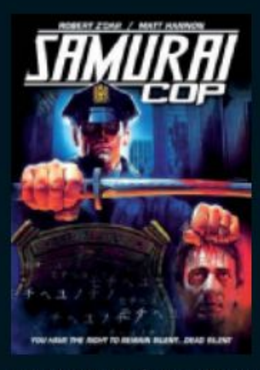
Alien Nation 1988
One of the finest immediate, post-*RoboCop* tie-in pictures, this moulds the cop buddy movie (eg *48 Hours*) with the sort of drab and dirty surroundings of Detroit/Delta City. The plot, in which a new drug is used to pacify the most 'unruly' members of the population, also has some elements in common with *RoboCop 2*.



Robot Jox 1990
After a nuclear war, two opposing nations exist: A Russian communist super-state and a capitalist free market alternative. The two battle by sending out robot competitors to demolish each other. This was all a bit indebted to *RoboCop*'s final tussle with ED-209, and the Cold War had ended by the time this flop hit the screens. Oops.

Maniac Cop 1988
It is easy to imagine the meeting behind this splatter shocker: "Hey, what if our cop was an invincible, resurrected ghost-from-beyond-the-grave? And can we hire Bruce Campbell to be the hero?" Like Murphy in *RoboCop*, 'Maniac Cop' is a former lawman, intent on finding his killers, but he wipes out pretty much everyone anyway...

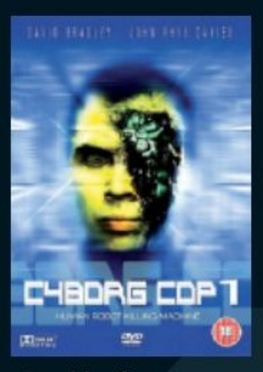
Guyver 1991
Hmm, this is an odd one – featuring *Re-Animator* actor Jeffrey Combs and some schmuck who gets transformed, RoboCop-style, into a, cyborg crime fighter after meddling with an otherworldly device. A silly, manga-inspired opus, enough people still checked it out to warrant a 1994 sequel: *Guyver 2: Dark Hero*.



Samurai Cop 1989
Maniac Cop not only led to two sequels and a very similar film (*Psycho Cop* – which also launched a franchise of its own) but it no doubt helped to inspire this one – in which RoboCop is replaced by a super samurai lawman, eager to take out some Yakuza criminals. It also features lots of mullets and bad acting.

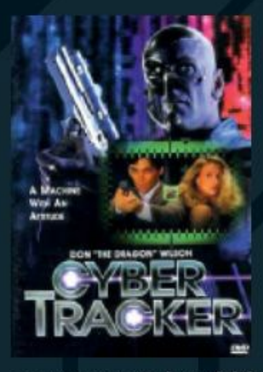
Accion Mutante 1993
Spain got in on the cyberpunk game with this comical slice of sci-fi, which owes some of its satire to the junk television 'infomercials' that screen throughout *RoboCop*. Every bit as postmodern as the Verhoeven flick, this thoroughly bizarre blood and violence epic has to be seen to be believed.

Crash And Burn 1990
The future is far from rosy in this Charles Band-produced piffle, in which the Ozone layer has depleted and a totalitarian government is in charge of the US – complete with robo-watchmen. As with Band's other *RoboCop* cash-in, *Robot Jox*, stop-motion cyborgs, which are very similar to ED-209, indulge in battles.



Cyborg Cop 1993
Well you have to give them props for the title at least. In this clunker none other than John Rhys Davies holds up on a Caribbean island where he turns people into robo-avengers. Every bit as daft as it sounds, this – rather shockingly – spawned two sequels (1994's *Cyborg Cop II* and 1995's *Cyborg Cop III*).

Hardware 1990
Part *Terminator* and part *RoboCop*, *Hardware* takes their cyberpunk credentials and the corporate suspicion of the Verhoeven picture to create a carnage-ridden trip through futuristic London. Perhaps acknowledging the influence, *Hardware* director Richard Stanley cast *RoboCop 3* star Robert John Burke in his next film, *Dust Devil*.



CyberTracker 1994
Do you really need to see a movie in which perennial straight-to-video action man Don 'The Dragon' Wilson lives in a futuristic Los Angeles where crime is fought by robot lawmen? Imagine *RoboCop* without the social commentary and approximately a fifth of the budget and you have *CyberTracker*... don't say you weren't warned!

The Games

Half-man, half machine, all game

Somewhat inevitably, given his gun-happy credentials, RoboCop went hand in hand with videogames. Instigated by software giant Ocean, the original *RoboCop* shoot-'em-up (released in 1988 for everything from the Spectrum to the Amiga and Atari ST systems) would become the bestselling PC game of the Eighties. A direct conversion of the acclaimed arcade game, the story walked Murphy through various side streets whereupon fire-power was needed to exterminate all number of crazy, weapon-wielding maniacs.

However, as any old-time gamer knows, the decade was owned by Nintendo and *RoboCop* would debut on the 8-bit NES with a lacklustre side-scrolling platform blaster from Data East. With awkward controls, and the ability to get killed at any given minute, the original Nintendo *RoboCop* was more of a challenge of patience than anything else – and not much was rectified when Ocean introduced a sequel on the system in 1991. Refreshingly, however, the events of *RoboCop 2* were at least pivotal to the game – with the character having to find quantities of Nuke in order to proceed. Also available on the Game Boy, *RoboCop*'s run on the Nintendo format is not fondly remembered.

By the time of *RoboCop 3*, however, Nintendo had released its SNES 16-bit system. Sadly, the much heralded level in which our hero flies across Detroit on a jetpack is, well, a bit crap. Much more interesting, though, was the long-awaited *RoboCop Versus Terminator* grudge match, which – based on the 1992 comic – became a videogame reality in 1993 on the SNES and the Sega Mega Drive/Master System (a NES 8-bit release was developed but cancelled). No doubt sending sci-fi fans into a state of ecstasy, the side-scrolling blaster is perhaps the best of all the *RoboCop* games.

Most recently, *RoboCop* has been adapted to the Xbox – with 2003's badly realised, and widely slammed, first-person shooter. The problems with this one are too long to list – with a 'tracking' mode that seems to work only when it wants to and villains who can apparently avoid your bullets. Just as the original tie-in games found it difficult to authentically 'translate' the robotic movements of the character without making it frustrating for the players, so too does the Xbox edition suffer from this. Yes, he might be made of tin but that does not mean it should be a chore to step behind the helmet of Detroit City's finest. Future game designers take note...

"He may be made of tin but that doesn't mean it should be a chore to step behind the helmet of Detroit City's finest"

ROBOCOP VS TERMINATOR **1993**

ARCADE GAME **1988**

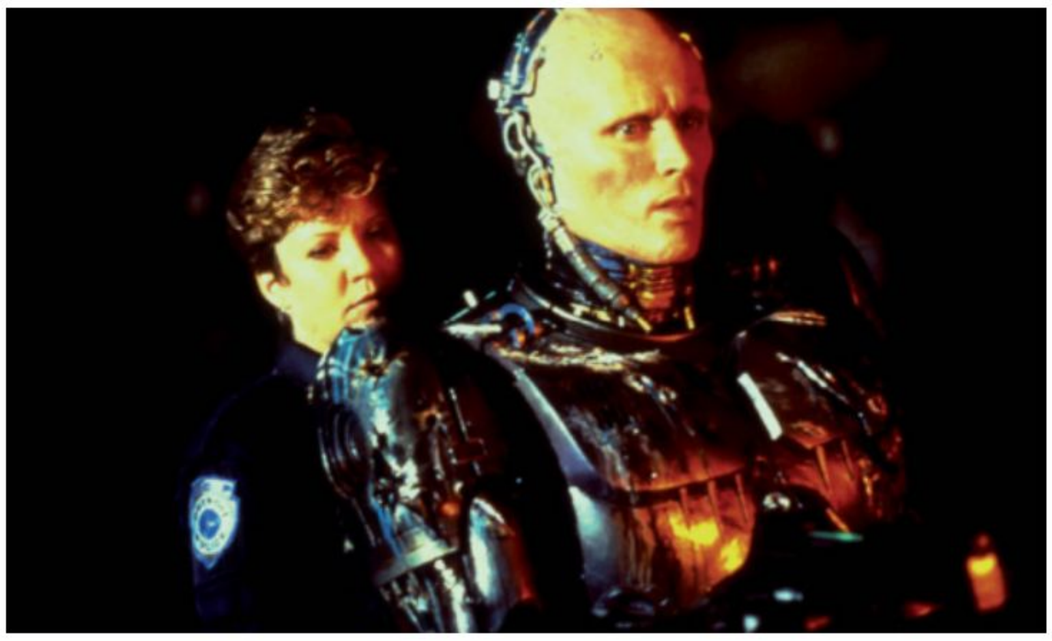
ROBOCOP 3 **1992**

ROBOCOP 3 **1992**

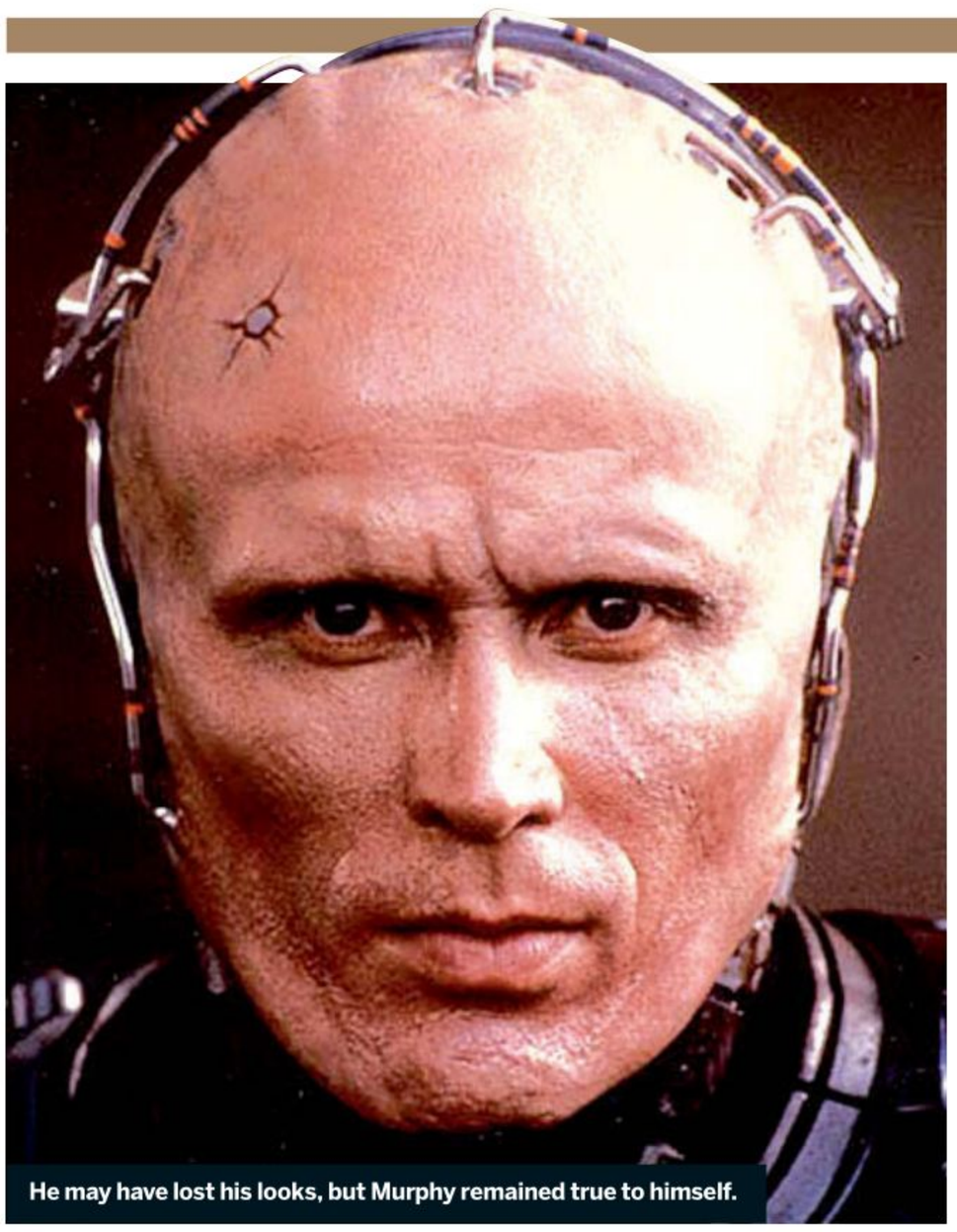
ROBOCOP **1988**

ROBOCOP (XBOX) **2003**

Robo's sidearm is arguably one of the coolest in sci-fi history.



RoboCop has had some terrific nemeses, Boddicker included.



He may have lost his looks, but Murphy remained true to himself.

There are so many classic scenes in *RoboCop*, full of tension and twists.

creation. To me that went back to *The Monster Squad* – I find it really touching when you have a pint-sized little punk kid with a giant, half mechanical man. So I said 'I would rather re-write Frank's script than start all over again' and in retrospect that was my first mistake. I think watering down that violent, crazy, drugged-out comic book sensibility that Verhoeven's movie had was a bad idea. You cannot do it. That is not who the character is."

Things got even worse when Orion went belly-up and *RoboCop 3* was held in limbo for two years – finally reaching American cinemas in November 1993, with fans and critics alike bemoaning the new, family-friendly escapades of the character. "In the end it did turn a small profit," mentions Dekker. "But what stung the most was seeing stuff like *Terminator 2* and *Jurassic Park* come out, which completely set a new standard for effects – to the point that *RoboCop 3* was left on the dust. So when it came out we were dead in the water."

"The show was even more watered down than the third film – with a lack of grit, grime or set pieces"

1993, however, also saw the debut of a new, syndicated *RoboCop* television series, this time with Richard Eden as the un-killable robotic law enforcer. Running for a whole 21 episodes (with a two-hour debut, which was ironically cribbed from a script that original writers Ed Neumeier and Michael Miner had conceived for *RoboCop 2*), the show was even more watered down than the third film – with a lack of grit, grime or gruelling action set pieces. However, the series did, from time to time, show some wit and invention worth noting – be it by attacking the more obscene elements of political correctness (Detroit's prison is now re-dubbed The Henry Ford Clinic for the Morally Challenged) or introducing Murphy's father (who was revealed to be a former policeman). Unfortunately, the ludicrous insistence that RoboCop refrain from shooting anyone made the broadcast version a bit of a damp squid.

Not, however, that this would mark the end of the big man's escapades, with 2000 bringing a fresh, four-part small screen spin-off, entitled *RoboCop: Prime Directives* to television watchers. Set ten years after the launch of the RoboCop model (this time the character is played, rather shabbily, by an undersized thespian called Page Fletcher), *Prime Directives* at least tries to return to some of the things that made the Verhoeven movie so great – be it sensationalistic media reports or the corporate/moneymaking agenda behind the more public face of the OCP Corporation. But while *Prime Directives* undoubtedly had honourable ideas behind its existence, it suffers greatly from cut-rate special effects and some particularly horrible acting. Neither complaint could be levelled at the 2014 *RoboCop* remake, helmed by Brazilian director José Padilha, whose critically acclaimed *Elite Squad* films were – much like Paul Verhoeven's original *RoboCop* – accused of glamorising police brutality and advocating fascism, but despite its sizeable budget and star-studded cast, it failed to make a significant impression, either critically or at the box office.

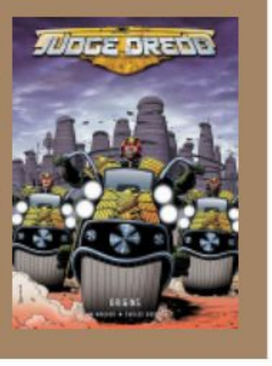
Yet, you cannot keep a character as iconic as RoboCop down. There will no doubt be other remakes, with different filmmakers aiming to put their spin on the character. We just hope that – one day – Detroit's top crime fighter will have another worthy screen escapade to his name.

The ideas behind the idea

The biggest influences on RoboCop

The most obvious influence on *RoboCop* is Fritz Lang's silent sci-fi epic *Metropolis* (1927), whose cyber-girl creation boasts a design that has sparked the imagination of genre filmmakers ever since. This, alongside Lang's dystopian and fiercely pessimistic look at a future ruled by corporate cash and control, makes *Metropolis* a groundbreaking classic. However, while Weller's original Robo-costume, and the movie's politics, can be seen to boast Lang's patronage, a more UK-centric rub comes from the character of Judge Dredd. Everything from Murphy's attitude and dialogue – and especially the use of "creep" to describe villains – to his chin-exposing helmet has been inspired by 2000 AD's favourite anti-hero. Then, of course, there is *The Terminator* – a feature which Paul Verhoeven himself admits to watching, and studying, as soon as he got the *RoboCop* gig. Cameron's original 1984 cyber-slasher flick is unapologetically violent, especially in regards to its gunplay (and, arguably, its gun fetishism), something that *RoboCop* twists and satirises, while retaining the gritty urban tone. 1982's *Blade Runner* is another vital picture in the legacy of *RoboCop*, especially because of its trendsetting awareness of the 'world' in which it inhabits; from corporate sponsorship, to giant billboards to unsafe technology, Ridley Scott's classic is nothing if not ahead-of-its-time. However, when all is said and done, the clear influence behind *RoboCop* is Reaganomics – the ideology that ruled the Eighties. Based upon a low tax, free market platform, the result saw a new level of corporate merging and influence, privatisation and state borrowing, which *RoboCop* unashamedly takes aim at.

"Everything from Murphy's attitude to his chin-exposing helmet has been cribbed from 2000 AD's anti-hero"



STAR TREK: STARDATE COLLECTIONS containing the first 10 films is available on Blu-ray from Paramount Home Entertainment priced £54.42.

46

JAMES T KIRK

Swashbuckling commanding officer of the USS-Enterprise during its five-year mission of exploration, Kirk was Starfleet's youngest and boldest Captain

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ IT IS impossible to imagine sci-fi today without the wry smile, jaunty posture and scrappy fighting technique of *Star Trek*'s James Tiberius Kirk – the man in the big chair during the Enterprise's five-year mission.

Kirk was a heroic leader and military commander with an eye for the ladies and an unwavering devotion to his crew, particularly his friends Spock and McCoy.

Jim bent the rules from time to time amassing the largest file on record at the Department of Temporal Investigations and much later a bump from Admiral back to Captain after stealing the Enterprise in *The Search For Spock*. His arc developed him from pioneering explorer in *TOS* to film series Kirk tackling death, friendship and change and his last appearance onscreen in Generations showed his courage and determination to make a difference up to the last. The JJ Abrams' reboots prove that Kirk is still very much an iconic character.

20 REASONS KIRK IS KING

DESPITE ITS BRIEF RUN STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES MADE LEGEND OF ITS DEEDS AND HEROES OF ITS CREW, AND NONE WERE MORE HEROIC AND LEGENDARY THAN CAPTAIN JAMES T KIRK. THE REASONS FOR HIS STATUS ARE COUNTLESS, BUT HERE'S 20 TO START YOU OFF

A BRIEF HISTORY OF KIRK

Profiling a legend

BORN IN Iowa, Earth on 22 March 2233, James Tiberius Kirk also lived on the planet Tarsus IV for a time, where he witnessed the massacre of 4,000 civilians by the Governor Kodos, under a programme of eugenics.

Kirk returned to Earth around 2250, and enrolled in Starfleet Academy. During his time there, he was the only student to beat the Kobayashi Maru scenario, a supposedly unwinnable exercise that he solved by reprogramming.

One of Kirk's first assignments was aboard the USS Farragut, during which he witnessed 200 of the crew killed. His later career in Starfleet was stellar, though, and at the age of 31 he became the youngest captain ever to hold a command. His assignment was to command the USS Enterprise on a five-year mission, one that would cement his status as one of the most respected captains in the organisation.

1 FREE SPIRITS

Other people may be shy about their body but Kirk gets his kit off most chances he gets

A Private Little War

Court Martial

Patterns Of Force

Plato's Stepchildren

The Gamesters Of Triskelion

Miri

KIRK SMASH!!!

"I'm a soldier... not a diplomat"

3 Kirk's negotiation strategies are direct and to the point. No fannying about for this captain – it's his way, or it's generally a right hook to the jaw. Despite this, however, he still has the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, as demonstrated when he spares the Gorn captain's life in the Season One episode 'Arena'.

Arena

David and Goliath

4 Kirk fought God and won. Twice. Alright, so the second one may not have actually been God, but surely he still gets points for having enough cojones to actually stand up to the Almighty. Because let's be honest, what does God need with a starship?

Who Mourns For Adonais, Star Trek V: The Final Frontier

2 Superman

When Kirk encounters a group of super soldiers from the 20th Century, he doesn't waste time trying to capture them and put them through the wheels of justice just so they can serve their time in relative peace. He maroons them on a death world. Unfortunately this does come back to haunt him later on and pretty much results in the death of his son, so maybe it wasn't the best move in hindsight. Then again, it was either that or lose the Enterprise, so which one would you have chosen?

Space Seed, Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan

5 Love is in the air

ALMOST ALL THE TIME...

Kirk gets the girl, literally all the time, on every world – except for that one occasion when Nimoy nearly managed to get some action in 'Amok Time' (narrowly avoided by a fight to the death with Kirk himself) and again in 'This Side Of Paradise' (once again foiled by Kirk). His uncanny ability to end up romantically entangled with nearly every woman he comes across may be seen by some as chauvinistic, but we'd just put it down to those abs.

Bailey: "We have phasers, I say we blast them!" Kirk: "Thank you Mr Bailey, I'll take that under consideration when this becomes a democracy."

6 The chain of command

Unlike other starship captains, Kirk won't take his subordinates to one side and give them a quiet talking to. He does it loudly, on the bridge, in front of everyone, as evidenced in 'Balance Of Terror' when he publicly rebukes Lieutenant Stiles for espousing anti-Romulan views. Of course, that didn't stop his own burgeoning dislike of the Klingons in later years, epitomised when Bones told him that the warlike species were dying, only for him to reply with "Let them die". Also, nobody can forget his exchange with Lieutenant Bailey during 'The Corbomite Maneuver' (see left).

Balance Of Terror, Corbomite Maneuver

7 Pub?

Despite being the most responsible man on the ship, Kirk's not above getting sauced every now and again.

The Enemy Within

8 Cultural diversity

The Prime Directive means nothing to Kirk. Well it does, but only sometimes. If it becomes an important aspect of an episode, it's usually because somebody's messed up and installed a Nazi regime somewhere, and the big man himself has to go and sort it out.

Patterns Of Force

9 Double dumbass!

He has, perhaps, the most inventive manner of swearing known to man.

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home

10 Good with kids

Kirk's adventures often led him into contact with children, or aliens masquerading as children, or child-like aliens...

1 CHARLIE X Kirk tried his best with Charlie, teaching him the ways of a woman's heart and a little judo for good measure. However, it seems Charlie just wasn't all that grateful when he tried to take over the ship.

2 MIRI Although he was only trying to help, as a grown-up on a planet full of children, Kirk was mistrusted and later beaten with a wrench. He did manage to save the day, however, thanks to McCoy's medical brilliance.

3 THE CORBOMITE MANEUVER The giant ship that traps the Enterprise may have projected the image of a hideous alien as its pilot, but the true commander is an incredibly intelligent (and incredibly creepy) child named Balok.

4 THE SQUIRE OF GOTHOS General Trelayne (retired) terrorises the crew of the Enterprise for a good long while, until it's finally revealed that he's not a general at all, he's just a child. A very, very naughty child.

5 THE DEVIL IN THE DARK Miners on a Federation colony are being killed by a mysterious creature, but it emerges that the creature was simply protecting its eggs, which the miners have been harvesting.

6 AND THE CHILDREN SHALL LEAD Kirk responds to a distress call and it becomes clear that the children of the Starnes expedition have a new, malevolent friend who has nobody's best interests at heart.

SAVE THE WHALES

Environmentally friendly

11 Kirk essentially repopulated the Earth's whale population on his own. Oh, we know that he had help, but what did the others really do? Spock wandered around San Francisco looking like a badly cast extra from *The Karate Kid*, Scotty and Bones spent most of their time messing around with engineers, and Chekov? "Where can I find the nuclear wessels?" Yeah, great covert infiltration strategy, buddy. At least Kirk had his priorities right.

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home

"Let's get the hell out of here"

12 Kirk doesn't mope around, feeling sorry for himself after losing the woman he loves. He gets in his ship, fires up the engines, and sets back out on the final frontier. Things didn't go particularly well for him after that, though, since the very next week he lost his brother in 'Operation: Annihilate', and the next season he had to fight his best friend to the death.

The City On The Edge Of Forever

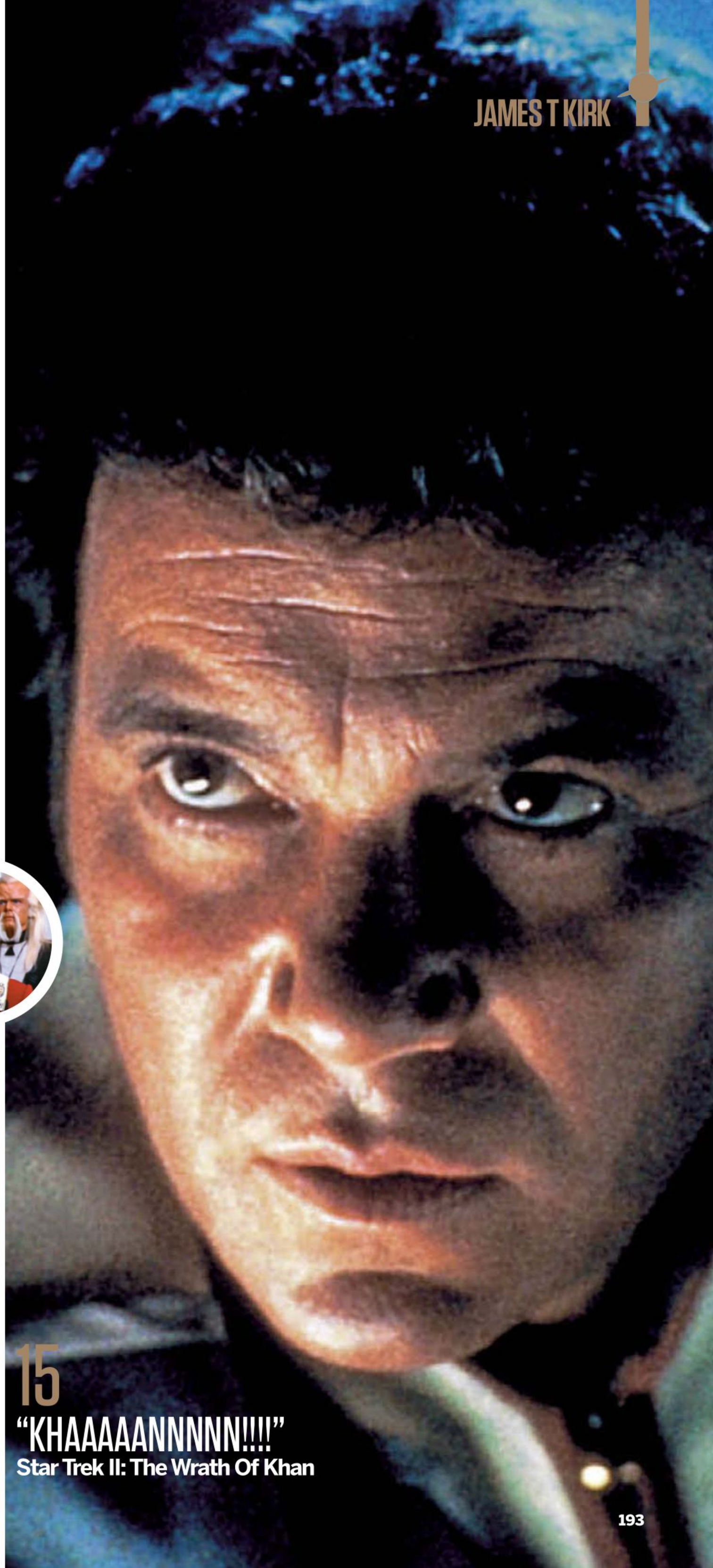
Peacemaker

13 Not content with resurrecting his friend, resurrecting a *species*, travelling back in time, fighting gods and saving the planet so many times that they may as well name it after him, Kirk still had time to make peace with humanity's mortal enemies, despite the fact that they killed his son.

Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country

14 "I don't like mysteries. They give me a belly ache, and I've got a beauty right now!"

The Man Trap



15 "KHAAAAANNNNN!!!!"

Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan

Kirk's follies

The captain's lesser moments

Two timing (The Enemy Within)

A wee bit of an accident splits Kirk into two very separate people. One has the best sides of his personality and is… well… a little wimpy. The other contains all of his darker attributes, and is one scary blighter.

Alternate reality (Mirror, Mirror)

Kirk from the Mirror Universe just isn't a very nice man. Having assassinated his former captain to get in the big chair, he solves rebellion problems by wiping out planets, and just generally being a bit of a nutcase really.

A powerful fixation (Obsessed)

Alright, so the gas creature did have it coming after it killed 200 of Kirk's old crew and gave him a lifelong guilt complex, but really, he should be more responsible than mindlessly endangering his new crew for the sake of revenge.

Snitching (Court Martial)

We can understand and even respect Kirk's diligence and sense of duty, but really, grassing up your best friend (who incidentally, named his daughter after you) for a mistake is a little harsh, to say the least.

Racketeering (A Piece Of The Action)

Whether or not the profits are going back into planetary development, the fact remains that Kirk still installed a crime cartel as the leadership of this particular world, a morally dubious move indeed.

A BIT O'ROUGH 'N' TUMBLE

Finishing the fight

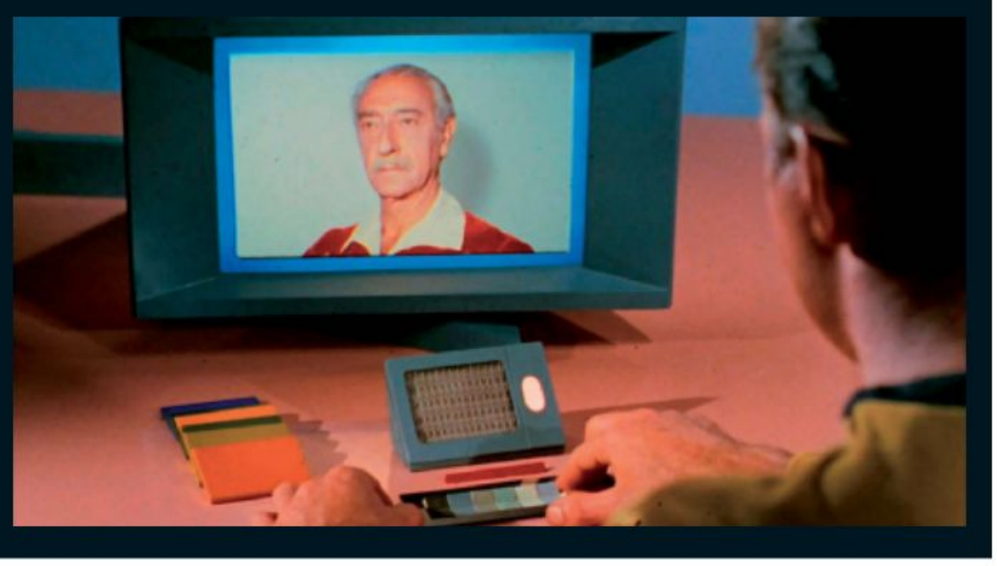
16 Kirk isn't actually afraid of anyone. Although the fact that he gets in a fight with the frequency of the most violent psychopath isn't particularly cool, it does lend his character a rough quality reminiscent of the old Wild West heroes. Interestingly, Kirk himself was actually based on Horatio Hornblower, from the eponymous series of novels that Gene Roddenberry described as the finest adventure stories known to man. We're not quite sure that we share his assessment of their literary quality, but he certainly put them to good use at least.

Star Trek: The Original Series, Star Trek I-VII

Survivor

18 Kirk survived two events in his youth that would have crippled lesser men. First was the massacre of 4,000 colonists on Tarsus IV by the planetary governor Kodos, due to a food crisis that was enveloping the world. The governor had decided that half of the population were ineffective and not worth wasting resources on, and Kirk would later have a muted form of revenge aboard the Enterprise. **(The Conscience Of The King)**

Second was an encounter with the dikironium cloud creature while serving aboard the USS Farragut. 200 of the crew died, an event that scarred the officer and nearly resulted in the destruction of the Enterprise later on. Although he carried guilt for passing out at his desk and not firing on the creature in time, the surviving first officer of the ship disagreed, stating that, "Kirk is a fine young officer who performed with uncommon bravery." **(Obsession)**



Doin' time

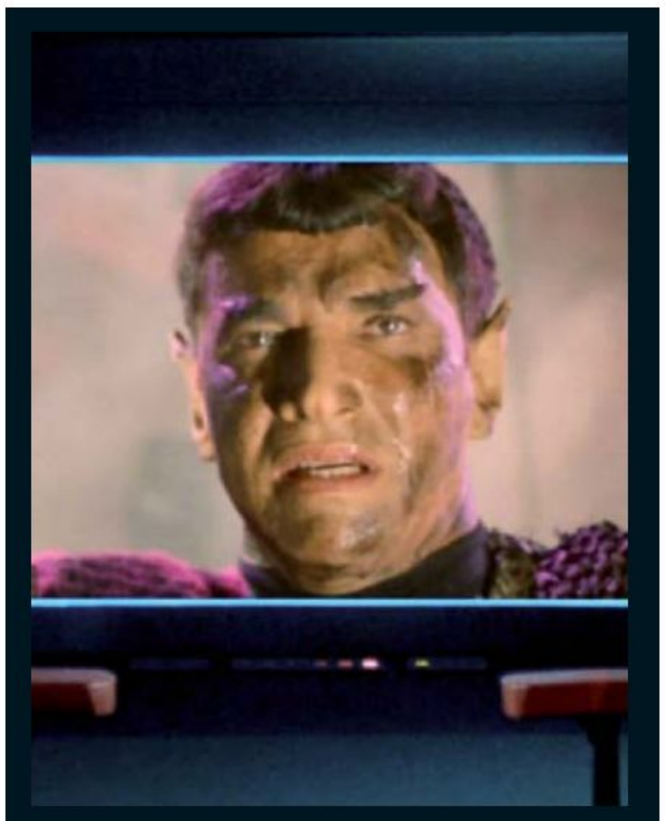
17 Although he may tend to get captured on a regular basis, Kirk's three easy steps to freedom are handy things to remember in any jailbreak scenario:

1 Imprisoned by Nazis? The horror. Even worse is when you lose your shirt, but always look to what's at hand for a quick escape.

2 Which happen to be subcutaneous transponders in this case. You'll need a Vulcan to fashion it into a crude laser, which can be pointed at the door.

3 Always look out for the inevitable guard, who'll come running to stop you rather than raise the alarm. Every time.

Patterns Of Force



20 A sharp mind

Kirk demonstrated his intelligence and tactical supremacy on many occasions, notably in 'The Corbomite Maneuver', 'Balance Of Terror', 'Arena', 'What Are Little Girls Made Of?' and *The Wrath Of Khan*, but the list is extensive.

"The more complex the mind, the greater the need for the simplicity of play."

Shore Leave, Balance Of Terror

"JIM, YOUR NAME IS JIM"

Loyalty

19 "I've already got a female to worry about. Her name is the Enterprise." Kirk's loyalty extended not only to his ship, but to his friends. After Spock gave his life to save the Enterprise at the end of *Wrath Of Khan*, Kirk risked everything to steal the ship to reunite the Vulcan's katra with his body. He also inspired loyalty in others, demonstrated by the fact that his crew stuck with him for most of their professional lives, and that Sulu later disobeyed orders twice in *Undiscovered Country*, first coming to rescue him from Rura Penthe before coming to his aid against General Chang.

The Corbomite Maneuver, Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan, Star Trek III: The Search For Spock, Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country

47

USS ENTERPRISE

Starfleet's most famous vessel as featured in the 1966 television series Star Trek, its movie spin-offs and into the TNG continuity

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
DESIGN: ★★★★★
OFFENSIVE POWERS: ★★★★★
SPEED OR RANGE: ★★★★★

■ FEW SHIPS in science fiction command the awe and respect of the USS Enterprise, from its first incarnation as Captain Kirk's Constitution class vessel, right up to the Sovereign class NCC-1701-E commanded by Captain Jean-Luc Picard.

Its look was groundbreaking and a world away from the missile-like rocket ships of sci-fi serials Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers. *Star Trek* art director Matt Jeffries' design had a logic to it with the powerful engines aimed away from the main body to minimise potential dangers to the crew and crucial systems built into the interior. The ship has even endured into the present day thanks to the JJ Abrams series of films and if the franchise ever returned to the small screen, as Captain Picard said, there are plenty more letters in the alphabet.

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48 SPOCK

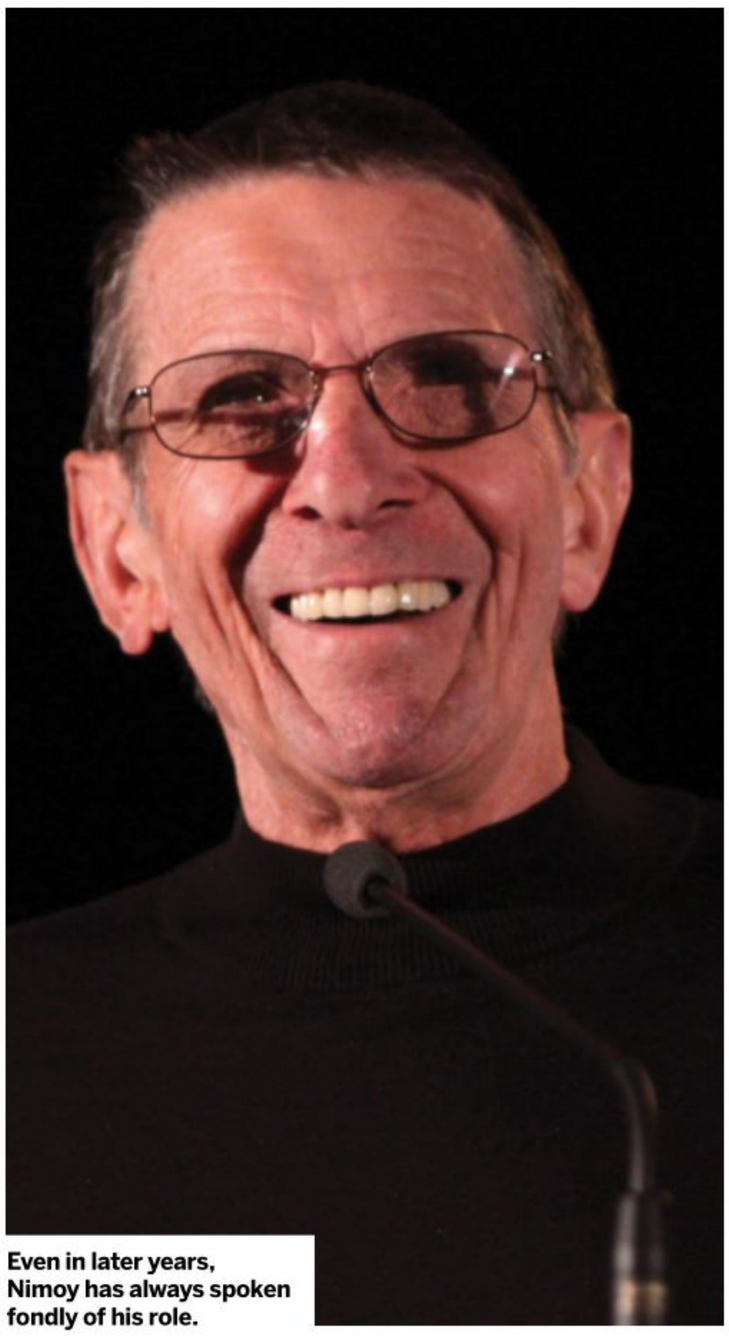
In February 2015, the sci-fi world lost one of its beloved character actors, Leonard Nimoy was happy to be remembered as Spock, and we will forever do so

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★½
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★½
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★½
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ WHEN THE original series of Star Trek launched in 1966, nobody could guess that almost 50 years, five different starship crews, numerous novels, games and 12 films later we would still hold the original crew in such high esteem. Or even have an emoji dedicated to Spock,

Captain James T Kirk's First Officer, Spock was a half-vulcan half-human who had a tendancy to be rather literal, and put intelligence and reason over his emotions. But every now-and-again his human side would shine through. The Vulcan's view human traits as a weakness, but, if anything, it was a strength. And resulted in a fair bit of sass a long the way.

Nimoy was so beloved as the character that he returned in the 2009 reboot as Spock Prime, the only one of the original cast to appear in the new trilogy opener. In fact, most of the story revolved around what happened to him. Live long and prosper.



Even in later years, Nimoy has always spoken fondly of his role.

Even space agency NASA paid tribute to the work of Nimoy in a statement.

He returned to *Star Trek* as Spock Prime in JJ Abrams reboot in 2009.

HE IS, AND EVER SHALL BE, SPOCK

ON 27 FEBRUARY 2015, THE WORLD OF SCI-FI LOST ONE OF ITS GREATEST ICONS. WE REFLECT ON THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF LEONARD NIMOY, WHO AS CAPTAIN SPOCK, HELPED MAKE STAR TREK WHAT IT IS TODAY

It was nearly 30 years ago, but I can remember nervously placing my cassette recorder on his desk, clicking record and asking him, "So, ready for another up-close and personal interview?"

"Oh yeah," he sighed.

It was November 1986, and this was the tail end of a gruelling two days of doing one of those up-close and personal interviews after another to promote the soon-to-be-released *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*. No doubt, I was very much aware, he had answered the same questions repeatedly.

Yet once Leonard began to speak, he came to life, his words filling with vigour, his manner expressing the enthusiasm of a child playing with a new toy that he was finally ready to share with the rest of the world. As he spoke, I found myself in an interesting position. On the one hand, sitting there was an actor/director whose growth as an artist was impressive and whose words conveyed a great sense of thoughtfulness, intelligence and humour. On the other, an occasional statement, turn of the head or slight cocking of an eyebrow couldn't help but convey the essence of Mr Spock.

Even before his passing on 27 February 2015, Leonard Nimoy had been heavily on my mind. *Star Trek* has become very much a living thing as we've moved through the decades and the franchise's highs and lows, and with all of that has come the renewed recognition of how much a part of it all Leonard has been.

In one of our interviews, *Star Trek* writer/story editor Dorothy Fontana explained to me, "Gene Roddenberry asked me to read the first bible for *Star Trek* in 1964. This was the very first proposal; the series presentation. I read it and said, 'I have only one question: who's going to play Mr Spock?' He pushed a picture of Leonard Nimoy across the table. I, of course, knew Leonard because he had appeared in my first [script sale], *The Tall Man*."

Roddenberry himself added, "Leonard Nimoy was the one actor I definitely had in mind. We had worked together when I was producing *The Lieutenant*. Leonard had been a guest star, and I was struck at the time with his high Slavic cheekbones and interesting face. I said to myself, 'If I ever do this science fiction thing I want to do, he would make a great alien.'"

That alien, of course, was Vulcan/human hybrid Mr Spock, science officer of the starship Enterprise, who would constantly wage an inner struggle between his two halves. Robert Butler, who directed Leonard in 'The Cage', observes, "Spock was an extremely attractive character right off the bat. Leonard was always thought to be a very fine character actor, really, who was able to make the audience think that Spock was foreign, but not so foreign that he was inaccessible and uncomfortable for the audience. We could make the jump to his planet without it causing us any emotional discomfort. That's where the success of his character lies."

Between the first and second pilots of *Star Trek* (the second being 'Where No Man Has Gone Before'), Leonard's Spock went through a marked transformation. While the first episode had moments of unbridled emotion, for the most part this was gone, and would further be buried as the character transitioned to the weekly series.

When I met with director Joseph Sargent on the Bahamas set of *Jaws: The Revenge*, the conversation turned to his directing the first weekly episode of *Star Trek*, and thoughts of Leonard.

"He was unhappy, because his character was without emotion," reflected Sargent. "He said, 'How can I play a character without emotion? I don't know how to do that. I'm going to be on one note throughout the entire series.' I agreed with him, and we worked like hell to give him some emotional context, but Gene said, 'No way, the very nature of this character's contribution is that he isn't an earthling. As a Vulcan, he is intellect over emotion.' Leonard was ready to quit, because he didn't know how he was going to do it."

But as Leonard conveyed, he came up with a personal solution: "Spock is not a character without

emotions; Spock is a Vulcan who has learned to control his emotions. But believe me, 12 hours a day, five days a week of controlling your emotions can have some strange effects on you. I remember one time in a meeting room having a conference with a couple of writers and suddenly finding myself crying for no reason at all. The emotions just had to come out somewhere, sometime. So I welcomed the opportunities to do scenes or episodes where Spock had some kind of emotional release."

Leonard's portrayal of Spock quickly ended up creating an emotional release in the show's viewers, almost instantly elevating the character's popularity and turning the actor into a cult hero. The end result was that Spock and Kirk became a team; a team that would define the original *Star Trek* from that point forward and whose essence would still be keenly felt in JJ Abrams' 2009 franchise reboot.

When *Star Trek* ended its run in 1969, Leonard quickly proved himself to be the most successful of the cast, replacing Martin Landau in *Mission: Impossible*, and appearing on Broadway in the 1973 revival of *Full Circle* and the 1974 production of *Equus*, in between voicing Spock in *Star Trek: The Animated Series*. At the beginning of that 1973-74 series, he proved the depth of the person he was. To save money, the production had initially decided not to include Uhura and Sulu actors Nichelle Nichols and George Takei, even though their characters would be visually represented – but voiced by, respectively – Majel Barrett and James Doohan.

Said Leonard, "That's when I took my stand. Not only had they not been hired, but their characters were written in the show and being played by other people. I was appalled! How could they do this?" When Leonard threatened not to do the show unless the situation was rectified, it was indeed taken care of.

Following *Equus*, he toured in various stage productions (including a one-man-show devoted to artist Vincent Van Gogh, and one in which he starred as Sherlock Holmes), hosted the syndicated television series *In Search Of...* and starred in Philip Kaufman's 1978 production of *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*. In the decades to come, he would be involved in a wide variety of other projects, ranging from the big screen to the small (including a recurring part as William Bell in the series *Fringe*), more stage work, recording albums, writing a pair of autobiographies, and pursuing his passions for art and photography (the latter of which resulted in his book of photos, *Shekhina*).

Through it all, *Star Trek* was ever present. There was disappointment (*Star Trek: The Motion Picture*), great joy (*Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan*), opportunity (directing *Star Trek III: The Search For Spock* and *Star Trek IV*, which led to numerous non-*Trek* films), and a sense of closure (*Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, plus a two-part appearance on *The Next Generation*). And then, of course, there was his appearance as Spock Prime in the 2009 film. I interviewed him then, and it was clear that he had reached an interesting perspective on his life.

"I'm much more settled, much more comfortable with whom I am, where I am and what has become before and what I see before me," he related. "I'm extremely satisfied that I've had a lot of great opportunities and put out a lot of energy and been involved in a lot of very interesting work. And now my personal life has taken a much more prominent place. I do a lot of photography, which is very gratifying, and that's my creative outlet. I just feel very comfortable with where I've arrived at."

It was clear that this comfort was settling in as far back as 1986, when we sat in his office in New York's Gulf & Western building and he expressed feelings about the *Star Trek* phenomenon that would stay with him until the end.

"I'm amazed by it," he offered. "Somebody was saying that at times in our lives you feel like a particle of matter, and there are other times when you feel as though you are part of a very large process. You step back and say, 'Wow!' It's the 'Wow!' that catches up with me still once in a while. It's spanning generations. Kids have grown up and had children who are now watching the show. It's quite extraordinary.

"I'm very grateful that it happened," he concluded our conversation. "I feel a great sense of accomplishment. Overall, we've done some great work. I hope that I haven't taken myself too seriously too often. I hope that the general fallout is positive. I think it is. I'm very pleased when I hear that people's lives have been affected positively because of *Star Trek*. I have often said that if I had to choose between characters that I would have to be identified with, I would choose Spock. I've had very good, positive feelings about it."

The partnership between Spock and Kirk has become legendary.

One of his most iconic moments was his (temporary) death in *The Wrath Of Khan*.

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER

SOME OF NIMOY'S MANY TRIBUTES

"We stood on your shoulders, and wouldn't have had a galaxy to explore if you hadn't been there, first. Thank you, Leonard, Rest in peace."
Wil Wheaton, Twitter

"Leonard lived his life so beautifully and with such grace. He was a very honourable person, and his life reflected that. His family reflects that. I lost my father at a very young age, and Leonard came to occupy a space in my life that was like a father figure. I had this person that I could look to with such respect. He was refined. And he cultivated a sense of dignity and respect for other people."
Zachary Quinto, The Guardian

"I loved him like a brother. We will all miss his humour, his talent, and his capacity to love."
William Shatner, Twitter

"He was an extraordinarily talented man, but he was also a very decent human being. His talent embraced directing as well as acting and photography. He was a very sensitive man, and we feel his passing very much."
George Takei, MSNBC

"RIP Leonard Nimoy. So many of us at NASA were inspired by Star Trek. Boldly go..."
NASA, Twitter

"Dearest Leonard. What a man you were. What a life you lived. As funny and thoughtful and generous and loving as you were talented. You taught us all, at every encounter. We will miss and love you forever."
JJ Abrams, Twitter

"In 2007, I had the chance to meet Leonard in person. It was only logical to greet him with the Vulcan salute, the universal sign for "Live long and prosper." And after 83 years on this planet – and on his visits to many others – it's clear Leonard Nimoy did just that. Michelle and I join his family, friends, and countless fans who miss him so dearly today."
Barack Obama, Vulture

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GENE RODDENBERRY

American television writer and creator of Star Trek, first screened in 1966 and the first in a franchise spanning almost 50 years

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
CRITICAL ACCLAIM: ★★★½★
WRITING SKILLS: ★★★½★
PRODUCTION SKILLS: ★★★½★

■ DURING FINAL auditions for *The Next Generation*, Gene Roddenberry said to one star: "In the 24th Century there will be no hunger, there will be no greed, and all the children will know how to read." This was his passionately held vision of the future – Humanity embracing its potential and devoid of selfishness, poverty and war.

Star Trek paved the way for science fiction on mainstream television and has inspired millions with its strong message of social harmony.

Roddenberry's vision lived on even after his death in 1991, with *Trek* spin-off series *Deep Space Nine*, *Voyager* and *Enterprise* as well as the *TNG* film series and most recently the JJ Abrams reboots. His notes also generated new sci-fi shows posthumously such as *Earth: Final Conflict* and *Andromeda*.

THE LOST RODDENBERRY INTERVIEW

WE PRESENT A VERY SPECIAL INTERVIEW CONDUCTED WITH THE LATE, GREAT STAR TREK CREATOR GENE RODDENBERRY AT ST JOHN'S UNIVERSITY IN QUEENS, NEW YORK, DURING AUTUMN OF 1975. SIX YEARS AFTER THE SERIES' CANCELLATION AND PRIOR TO THE RELEASE OF THE MOTION PICTURE, HE DISCUSSED THE ORIGINS OF THE SHOW AND THE FUTURE OF TV AS HE SAW IT AT THE TIME...

© Corbis

Without Roddenberry, the genre would be very different indeed.

Gene, how did you get started with *Star Trek*?
Two things, really. I had been a freelance writer for about a dozen years and was chafing increasingly at the commercial censorship on television, which was pretty strong in those days (and is still pretty strong today). I recalled that when Jonathan Swift was writing *Gulliver's Travels*, he wanted to write satire on his time, and he went to Lilliput in his story to do just that. It was sort of a wonderful thing. Children could read it as a fairy tale, an adventure, and as they got older they'd recognise it for what it really is. It seemed to me that perhaps if I wanted to talk about sex, religion, politics, make some comments against Vietnam and so on, that if I had similar situations involving those subjects happening on other planets, to little green people, indeed it might get by. It did.

In your opinion, which was the most exciting episode to work on?
Probably the most exciting shows were not the best shows. We tried to make the equivalent of half a science fiction motion picture a week. Often it was just a miracle that we got the show into the can by Friday with a beginning, a middle, and an end. I recall that on one of the shows, 'Shore Leave', I was rewriting the show, sitting in a camper, while the actors were acting it. That was a pretty exciting and harrowing and nervous thing. I think the most fun to do was a show called 'The City On The Edge Of Forever' written by Harlan Ellison.

Were there any episodes filmed, or scripts written, for the possible fourth season of *Star Trek*, if there had been one?
No. There have been a lot of rumours… There were 79 episodes, plus the first pilot, which hasn't been shown on TV, by itself.

What did the first script that you wrote for the upcoming *Star Trek* movie consist of?
The first script was a story that had to deal with the meaning of God, as laid out in the Old and New Testaments. Whether God is something much higher and much more further beyond merely an entity who had visited the Garden of Eden.

What reasons did Paramount give for rejecting it?
It was felt by some higher-ups that my script might offend religious people. Perhaps it had just offended *them*. I had had the script read by a couple of Jesuit priest friends, a rabbi, and a number of others, and they were not offended. Apparently, the skin was a little thinner at the top of the studio heads.

What will be some of the changes made in a new *Star Trek*?
I think one area is female equality. Although we have always believed in female equality, and we fought the networks on it back in the Sixties, we were limited in what we could do. The term 'women's lib' wasn't even used then. I think today we could show women in totally equal positions. Although television is still heavily censored, there are a lot of areas that have become open, mostly in relation to sex. We could be a little more honest about that. I think we will begin to reflect the problems of the Seventies, the things on our minds now, rather than problems and things that perhaps were on our minds in those days.

Will the old cast be back in the movie, and will there be new characters and stars?
The old cast will be back. I'm sure we can get them all, assuming availability, and I hope they'll all be available. I think, however, we'll look around for new faces. Since we're doing a movie, we probably will cast some big name stars in cameo spots, and things like that. Obviously we want people other than just *Star Trek* fans to be attracted to the film. We would like to have a movie that anyone might be interested in seeing, while at the same time not disappointing the *Star Trek* people.

Will the people who worked behind the scenes on *Star Trek* also be returning?
Well, I thought they were the best then, and I do now. I've chatted with all of them, and I think it's like it is with the actors: if available, I think they'd all like to come back. Some of them have gotten awfully expensive since I first hired them; some were just assistant people when *Star Trek* started. We knew we had a crushing burden to make the show – everyone said it was impossible to make it. One way I thought we might be able to do it was to find very bright people and promote them to department heads. With this being their first opportunity, we figured they would run, not walk – really, really go – and not be upset at 12-hour days and so on.

Would you rather *Star Trek* continue as a series of films like *Bond*, or as a recurring series of TV movies, such as *Columbo*?
We would prefer *Star Trek* to come back on the air, which is an idea that the network has indicated that they like very much, assuming that the movie is a success. That way we do it as a number of 90-minute or two-hour shows each year. It's better for us because we have a chance to polish the series, get better budgets, and good directors.

Gene Roddenberry's legacy lives on, with JJ Abrams's reboot taking *Star Trek* into the new millennium.

In saying that we'll solve some of the problems we have today, and that we'll still even be around in 200 years, *Trek* was a very optimistic show. Do you still feel as hopeful?
I feel optimistic about mankind. I never said in *Star Trek*, however, that their time of great peace, achievement, and really adult reasoning in civilisation was necessarily a direct and uninterrupted outgrowth of our present society, with its considerable interests in materialism and so on. I think man's progress has always been in the order of three steps forward and two back. We build, usually, new civilisations on top of old ones that have crumbled. The idea of our civilisation crumbling and having to build a new one is very frightening, but I think we can make it. If I didn't, I wouldn't have a 22-month-old son. I think we'll very likely have to go through a dark ages and get knocked around quite a bit to wake up. But this doesn't mean that I'm not optimistic about mankind. I think that we are remarkable creatures and that we will make it. It's just that the way of getting there may be a little jumpier than most people conceive.

What's your explanation of the phenomenon *Star Trek* has become?
I really have no single good explanation. We've noticed, very much, that our show appeals to young-minded people. Whether they're eight or 80, the one thing all our fans seem to have are young minds. I think, of course, that any show that comes along in a time when people are saying that everything's all over with, and the series says, "Wow! It's really just beginning. There's challenge and adventure tomorrow like you've never seen…" it will probably be very exciting for them. I think probably the other thing we've noticed most is that in a time of anti-heroes, we portrayed real heroes, almost old-fashioned in their beliefs: personal integrity, their word was their bond,

Roddenberry pushed *Star Trek* into tackling controversial issues most put to one side.

***Star Trek* was a credit to the genre, and is now one of its biggest properties.**

Roddenberry's characters remain some of sci-fi's most iconic.

"IT WOULD WORRY ME IF OVER THE NEXT 25 YEARS, TV REMAINS THE TOOL OF MERCHANDISING PEOPLE"

and other things like that. I think that today, people are hungry for images that they can follow.

How do you feel about some of the science fiction shows that are being done today?
I think that some of the opticals and special effects are splendid. I think that some producers, unfortunately, are making a mistake that science fiction has been making in films and television for many years, which is to forget that good stories are about people. Basically, you must have characters and character development. Gadgets will not carry you, and some of these shows are depending too much on gadgetry.

How do you feel about violence in television, and films?
My feeling on violence is a little different from most; I think that most comments on violence are too simplistic. I think violence in drama, when properly motivated, is all right. I object to non-motivated violence. I object to sparking up a cowboy movie with some socks in the jaw. I know from my own life experience that a fist in the jaw from a man causes broken teeth and bones, and it hurts. I don't think we should have violence of that type. On the other hand, I think there has been too little violence in some other areas. I think that if our war movies for the past 25 or 30 years had shown violence as it really is in war, where you don't clutch your breast and die cleanly, but you lay out there screaming your guts hanging out, there would have been a lot less people anxious for running the Vietnam war. I think it depends on how you use violence.

What advice would you give someone trying to break into writing?
I would give them the same advice my writing professor at Columbia University gave me many years ago. He used to look at the class, assume we were above average intelligence – if we weren't, we had no business being there; that we were omnivorous readers – which we should have been, and he would say, "Anyone in this class willing to write 3 million words for free of charge can probably begin to sell something." He would then finish off by saying, "Fortunately, 30 out of 40 of you will give up. I say fortunately, because otherwise we'd be up to our neck in writers."

For years, television has played an important part in American people's lives. What do you think about the future of TV?
I'm very concerned about the way television is going and what it can become. We are beginning to realise with certain studies coming out of UCLA, Harvard and other places, that television has an enormous impact on people, much stronger than was ever before recognised. It would worry me if over the next 25 years, television remains merely the tool of merchandising people, who use TV solely to sell products. I'm worried about the future of a country which is being bombarded with sound and image, in which the sole basis of whether it gets on the air is will it, or will it not, sell toothpaste, soap, beer and so on. I think we are going to have to protect ourselves from TV by going to some kind of pay TV – not that we don't pay for it now. We pay a tax on television with every bar of soap we buy. Probably the phoniest cry you'll ever hear is, "Don't pay for what you're getting for free!" You're already paying, except that you're just paying for a lot of stuff you don't want.

JEAN-LUC PICARD

50

JEAN-LUC PICARD

Captain of the Galaxy Class Federation Starship Enterprise-D, later Enterprise-E; briefly Locutus of Borg, Picard is Star Trek's first true icon since The Original Series

SOCIAL IMPACT: ★★★★★
SCI-FI LEGACY: ★★★★★
FAN-FOLLOWING: ★★★★★
COMBAT SKILLS: ★★★★★
INTELLIGENCE: ★★★★★

■ WHEN WILLIAM Shatner and Patrick Stewart were asked how their *Star Trek* characters would've dealt with Saddam Hussein, Shatner declared Kirk would "have told him to drop dead" while Stewart said Picard "would still be talking."

For children of the Eighties, Kirk was a legend but Picard was their captain. A fiercely intelligent master diplomat and Renaissance man, Jean-Luc led and inspired his crew by example. Stewart often jokes about his casting, being what he described as "a middle-aged bald English Shakespearean actor" but he redefined the role of Captain for a new generation of Trekkies and remains not just loved but respected by fans.

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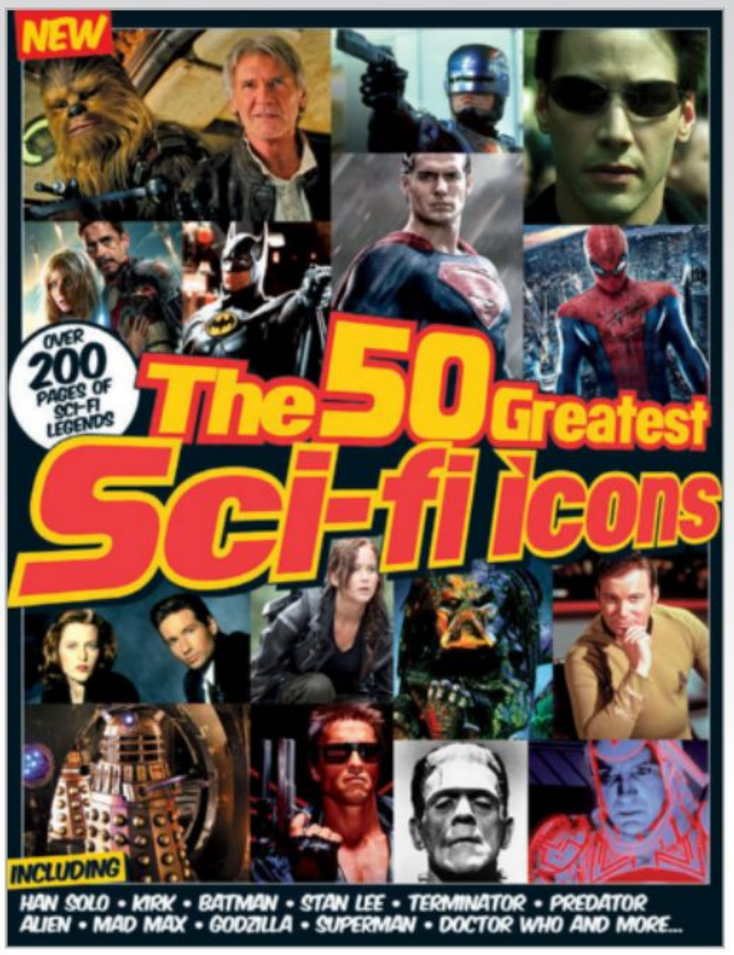

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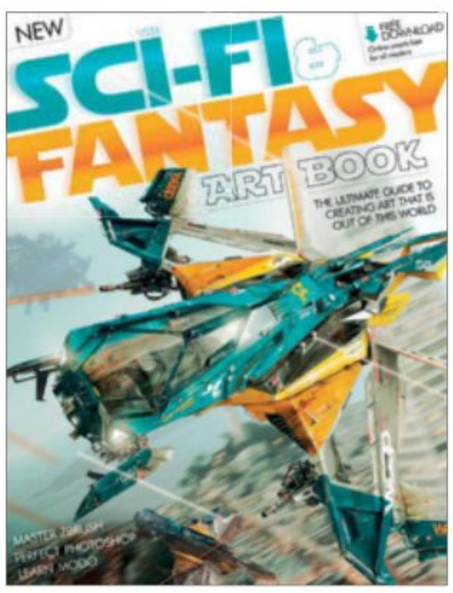

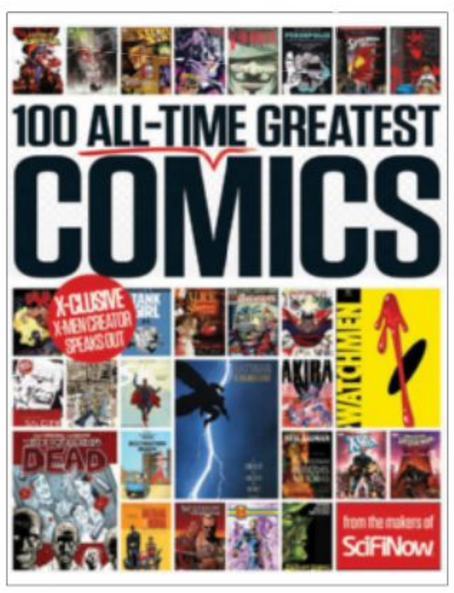

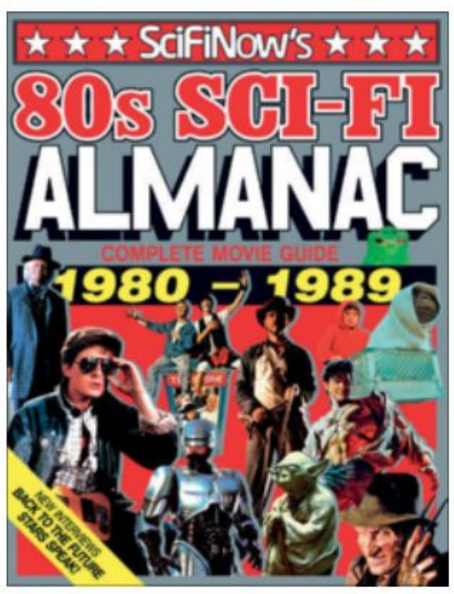

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